



GOVERNMENT OFFICE
OF THE SLOVAK REPUBLIC

REPORT

ON THE SITUATION AND RIGHTS
OF PERSONS BELONGING TO
NATIONAL MINORITIES 2015

2015



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Introduction

Due to its history and cultural development, the Slovak Republic has a dimension of multi-ethnicity and multi-culturality encoded in its genes. The contribution of the cultures of national minorities, which forms a permanent part of our cultural heritage, is an important element of Slovakia's cultural wealth, spiritual values and cultural diversity. Being a multi-ethnic country, the Slovak Republic attaches utmost importance to the harmonious coexistence between the majority population and persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, in compliance with internationally established standards.

In this context, the Slovak Republic is committed to the European values and ideas of inter-cultural and inter-ethnic dialogue and development of understanding between the majority society and persons belonging to the various national minority and ethnic population groups. The Government of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'Government') sees minorities as a permanent part of the modern Slovak society and supports the activities of national minorities living in Slovakia, which significantly contribute to shaping and developing its cultural diversity.

The key tasks in this context include measures and activities aimed at preserving, developing and promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and implementing systemic measures to improve the situation of persons belonging to national minorities; these tasks fall under the competence of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (hereinafter also the 'Plenipotentiary') as an advisory body to the Government. One of the Plenipotentiary's key roles is to monitor, analyse and evaluate the respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities by State administration authorities, the authorities of municipalities and self-governing regions and other relevant bodies. In this context, the Plenipotentiary presents to the Government annual reports on the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

Just like last year, the present 2015 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities (hereinafter the 'Plenipotentiary's Report'), which is the fourth such report, focuses, in particular, on updating the relevant data, information and evaluations, while concentrating on those areas where changes have occurred since the previous year. Where the context so requires, the content of the Report also covers periods before and after the period under review.

The first of the Report's five parts deals with the Slovak Republic's national and international commitments in the area of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities, maps out the monitoring processes under the control mechanisms for particular commitments and contains an overview of the key legislative changes in this area during the period under review.

In the section on 'Strategic and policy documents and action plans', the Report deals in detail with the process of implementation of the tasks arising from the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic in the area of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, including the preparation of the draft Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups.

In the second part concerning the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance, the Plenipotentiary's Report reviews recent developments in this area, in particular as regards the various participatory mechanisms, the results of their

activities in the period under review, including the activities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary of Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities (hereinafter the ‘Office of the Plenipotentiary’) focusing on creating room for participation.

The third part of the present Report concentrates on comprehensive information on all areas in which the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of persons belonging to national minorities are promoted by the relevant departments.

The fourth part concerns education and training for persons belonging to national minorities and gives a comprehensive and detailed picture of all aspects relating to education and training for this target group, including informal education in this area.

The final, fifth, part deals with the issue of the use of national minority languages, including the application practice.

The Report also contains Annexes, which provide additional information and data related to the individual parts of the Plenipotentiary’s Report.

In the interest of using a gender-sensitive language, whenever the masculine gender is used in the text of this Report, it will be deemed to include the feminine to a reasonable extent.

Part I – National and international commitments of the Slovak Republic in the area of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities

1.1 National commitments of the Slovak Republic in the area of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities

The rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups are constitutionally guaranteed in the Slovak Republic, in particular under Article 34 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter also the ‘Constitution’). The Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic has produced a number of legal opinions important for the interpretation and the basic rules of application of Article 34 of the Constitution.¹

The constitutional provisions are further elaborated in more than 30 pieces of legislation on the protection of the rights of national minorities.² Some of the legislation below was amended in 2015:

- amendment to Act No 365/2004 Coll. on equal treatment in certain areas, protection against discrimination and on amendments to certain laws (Anti-discrimination Act);

Amendment: Act No 378/2015 Coll. on voluntary military training and on amendments to certain laws, effective from 2 January 2016.

The amendment to the Anti-discrimination Act extended the prohibition of discrimination to include the discrimination against persons and soldiers in voluntary military training on the grounds of gender, religion or belief, racial origin, belonging to a nationality or ethnic group, sexual orientation, marital and family status, family responsibilities, colour of skin, language, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status, or due to whistle-blowing.

- amendment to Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws;

Amendment: Act No 188/2015 Coll. amending Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 September 2015.

The amendment to the Schools Act extended § 33 to include paragraph (8)(d), which provides that administrators of secondary schools may, in specific cases, determine a lower number of students in a class than that referred to in § 33(7) of the Schools Act, namely nine students in the case of full-time programmes and five students in distance learning programmes. Within the meaning of the amendment, specific cases also include secondary schools in which education and training is provided in the State language and, at the same time, in the language of the relevant national minority, provided that it is not possible to open a class for education and training in the State language or in the language of the relevant national minority in accordance with § 33 (7) of the Schools Act.

¹Drgonec, J. Ústava Slovenskej republiky. Komentár. [Constitution of the Slovak Republic. Commentary.] 3rd edition. Šamorín : Heuréka, 2012.

²See, for example, the 2012 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities.

- amendment to Act No 596/2003 Coll. on State administration in the school system and school self-government and on amendments to certain laws;

Amendment: Act No 188/2015 Coll. amending Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 September 2015.

The amendment added § 35a(1)(b), which lays down that schools and educational establishments included in the network are required to provide to the Ministry statistical data from annual surveys on the numbers of children, pupils and students and their age structure, broken down by the language of instruction, nationality, field of study or vocational training and special educational needs as at 15 September of the school year.

- adoption of Act No 126/2015 Coll. on libraries and on amendments to Act No 206/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries, protection of cultural objects and on amendment to Slovak National Council Act No 372/1990 Coll. on offences, as amended, as amended by Act No 38/2014 Coll. effective from 1 July 2015;

In § 12(3), the new act lays down that libraries are required to take into account the satisfaction of the needs of persons belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups when developing their library holdings: “In municipalities with residents belonging to a national minority or ethnic group, public libraries shall take this fact into account when supplementing and developing their library holdings.”.

- amendment to Act No 575/2001 Coll. on the organisation of government activities and the organisation of central government, as amended;

Amendment: Act No 172/2015 Coll. amending Act No 575/2001 Coll. on the organisation of government activities and the organisation of central government, as amended, and amending Act No 513/1991 Coll., the Commercial Code, as amended, effective from 1 September 2015.

The amendment inserted new § 40x in the Act, which lays down that the competence of the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic in the area of human rights under the existing legislation of general application is transferred to the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic, with the exception of the provision of grants. At the same time, the amendment extended § 13 of the act to include paragraph (9), which provides that the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic will ensure the development and implementation of the State policy and coordination of the implementation of the tasks in the field of human rights.

The following amendments to relevant legislation that do not have a direct impact on the issue of persons belonging to national minorities have been adopted:

– amendment to Act No 211/2000 Coll. on free access to information and on amendments to certain laws (Freedom of Information Act);

Amendment: Act No 340/2015 Coll. amending Act No 211/2000 Coll. on free access to information and on amendments to certain laws (Freedom of Information Act), as amended, effective from 1 January 2016.

- amendment to National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No 154/1994 Coll. on registrar’s offices;

Amendment: Act No 124/2015 Coll. amending National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No 154/1994 Coll. on registrar’s offices, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 October 2015.

- amendment to Act No 564/2001 Coll. on the Public Defender of Rights;

Amendment: Act No 176/2015 Coll. on the commissioner for children and the commissioner for disabled persons and on amendments to certain laws, effective from 1 September 2015.

Amendment: Act No 338/2015 Coll. amending National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No 120/1993 Coll. determining the emoluments of certain constitutional officials of the Slovak Republic, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 January 2016.

- amendment to National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No 38/1993 Coll. on the organisation of, proceedings before and status of the judges of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic;

Amendment: Act No 402/2015 Coll. amending National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No 38/1993 Coll. on the organisation of, proceedings before and status of the judges of the Constitutional Court of the Slovak Republic, as amended, effective from 1 January 2016.

- amendment to Act No 99/1963 Coll., the Code of Civil Procedure, as amended;

Amendment: Act No 131/2015 Coll. amending Act No 480/2002 Coll. on asylum and on amendments to certain laws, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 11 June 2015.

Amendment: Act No 175/2015 Coll. amending Act No 36/2005 Coll. on family and on amendments to certain laws, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 January 2016.

Amendment: Act No 267/2015 Coll. amending Slovak National Council Act No 323/1992 Coll. on notaries and notarial activities (Notarial Code) as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 December 2015.

Amendment: Act No 438/2015 Coll. amending Act No 99/1963 Coll., the Code of Civil Procedure, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 23 December 2015.

- amendment to Act No 301/2005 Coll., the Code of Criminal Procedure, as amended;

Amendment: Act No 401/2015 Coll. amending Act No 153/2001 Coll. on prosecutor's offices, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 January 2016.

Amendment: Act No 444/2015 Coll. amending Act No 300/2005 Coll., the Criminal Code, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 January 2016.

1.1.1 Strategic and policy documents and action plans

Within the scope of competence defined by the statute, the Plenipotentiary develops, proposes and implements, in cooperation with the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'Office of the Government'), ministries and other central government authorities, medium- and long-term measures in the area of preserving, developing and promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

In this context, the Office of the Plenipotentiary joined the process of developing the *National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic* (hereinafter the 'Strategy'), which continued in 2015. The process followed from the results of the activities in this area in the preceding years. The Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (hereinafter also the 'Committee') was engaged in the process of preparing the

strategy already back in 2013, when, applying the participatory approach, it set up an expert working group to draft the part of the Strategy relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups. The working group was active in the period between December 2013 and April 2014. In accordance with the plan, this working group prepared a base document, which was presented to the public at two workshops. Subsequently, the working group presented the base document for the preparation of the part of the strategy relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups at the Committee's XIIth session and, after incorporating the comments and suggestions from the members of the Committee, the document was approved. In April 2014, the Office of the Plenipotentiary presented to the Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MFEA SR'), the *Base document for the preparation of the part of the Strategy relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups*. After approval (1 December 2014) by the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality (hereinafter also the 'Council of the Government'), the document was recommended (8 December 2014) by the Economic and Social Council of the Slovak Republic for further proceedings.

The Strategy, approved by the Government on 18 February 2015 through Resolution No 71/2015, forms a comprehensive basis for further development of human right policies. The *Base document for the preparation of the part of the strategy relating to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups*, which forms Annex 1 to the Strategy, identifies priorities and tasks, the implementation of which is aimed at improving the situation of persons belonging to national minorities. These relate to the areas of legislation, culture, education, training, language, media, support for the development of participatory mechanisms and strengthening of the position of advisory and consultative bodies, including the strengthening of the capacity of organisational units ensuring the functioning of these mechanisms and intensifying comprehensive research on national minorities.

Under point B.5 of Resolution No 71/2015, the Government tasked the Head of the Office of the Government to draw up, by 31 December 2015, within the scope of his competence, an action plan for those vulnerable and marginalised groups and individuals for which no legislative frameworks, institutional frameworks, separate strategies or application frameworks existed.

Under point B.6, the Government tasked the Head of the Office of the Government to implement the tasks specified in the Strategy and, by 30 June 2016 and then every two years, present to the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign and European Affairs, who is the coordinator of the implementation of the tasks in the area of human rights, a report on the implementation of the tasks arising from the Strategy, including proposals for updating them.

Under point B.7, the Government tasked the Head of the Office of the Government to build upon the Strategy when developing, updating and implementing public policies and apply the strategy's priorities in all of the Government's strategic and programming documents and in public policies with a deadline on 30 June 2016 and then annually.

According to the text of the Strategy, in the process of developing the Strategy, the need was identified to adopt new programming documents (action plans) for human right policies focusing on the rights of LGBTI persons, the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and the rights of persons at risk of poverty.

Within the meaning of Resolution No 71/2015 referred to above, the Head of the Office of the Government assigned the relevant task to the Office of the Plenipotentiary. In accordance with this task, the Chairperson of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups presented, at the Committee's XVIIth session held on 18 May 2015, the document 'Information on the preparation of the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups', together with a proposal to set up a temporary working group to formulate the action plan. At this session, the Committee discussed and, through Resolution No 67, took note of the 'Information on the preparation of the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups' and tasked the Chairperson of the Committee to set up a temporary working group to formulate the draft plan. The group comprised five representatives of State administration - the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport, Ministry of the Interior, Office of the Government, Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities, and five experts on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups nominated by members of the Committee together with CVs providing proof of their expertise. The proposals for members of the temporary working group sent to the Secretariat by the members of the Committee were fully accepted.

The Committee's temporary working group to formulate the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups (hereinafter the 'Action Plan') was set up for the period between 1 June 2015 and 31 December 2015, during which this group held a total of five meetings. As planned, the members of the temporary working group formulated a proposal for the main objective of the Action Plan and the individual operational objectives for the areas defined in the Base Document. They also dealt with the organisation of workshops related to the Action Plan.

The draft Action Plan was presented to both the professional and the general public at three workshops that took place on 5 November 2015 in Banská Bystrica, 6 November 2015 in Košice and 9 November 2015 in Bratislava. The events focused on the presentation of the results of the temporary working group's work aimed at analysing the current situation in the area of the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups and specifying the priorities and tasks under the Action Plan. The participants invited to the events were selected very carefully in order to ensure that the participation is as broad as possible. Representatives of national minorities, regional governments, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, RTVS and regional televisions, the Association of Slovak Towns and Villages (hereinafter the 'ASTV'), Union of Towns of Slovakia (hereinafter the 'UTS'), the National Institute for Education and NEC (the National Edification Centre) were also invited to join the formulation of the various areas of the Action Plan. The workshop in Banská Bystrica was attended by 17 participants and the workshops in Košice and Bratislava by 25 participants and 31 participants, respectively.

The members of the working group representing national minorities also attended the workshops. In the discussion, the experts and representatives of national minorities present expressed their proposals and recommendations concerning the various proposed activities and measures, as well as an analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in the context of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups (SWOT analysis), that the temporary working group incorporated into the updated version of the draft Action Plan.

Representatives of regional governments, the Statistical Office of the Slovak Republic, ASTV and UTS were invited to attend the temporary working group's last session to discuss the activities under the Action Plan. The participants reviewed the process of preparation of

the draft Action Plan, including the contribution of the workshops, and addressed the comments and suggestions raised by ministries, as well as comments and suggestions raised at the aforementioned workshops. Subsequently, the draft Action Plan was presented at the Committee's XIXth session held on 17 December 2015. Through Resolution No 79, the Committee approved the *Draft 2016-2020 Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups*.

The key policy documents relevant to the area of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities adopted last year include the *Concept for the Fight Against Extremism for the Period 2015-2019* (hereinafter the 'Concept'). This concept, adopted through Government Resolution No 129 of 18 March 2015, is the basic document defining the Slovak Republic's strategic priorities in the area of prevention and elimination of radicalisation and extremism and the related anti-social activities posing a risk to fundamental rights and freedoms and the foundations of the democratic rule of law. The concept, presented as an initiative of the Ministry of the Interior, is a strategic document building upon the previous two concept documents in this area. The purpose of adopting and implementing the measures proposed in the concept is based on the need to protect the values enshrined in the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, international human right conventions binding on the Slovak Republic, as well as other strategic documents in this area. At the same time, this concept reflects the tasks under the Internal Security Strategy of the European Union in the field of prevention of violent extremism and radicalisation. In this concept, the Slovak Republic distanced itself from accepting manifestations of hate against certain population groups for reasons such as gender, race, colour of skin, ethnic or national origin, language, sexual orientation, religion or affiliation with a social class.

Through Government Resolution No 12 of 13 January 2016, the *Action Plan for the Prevention and Elimination of Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Forms of Intolerance for 2016-2018* was approved. The draft action plan Action Plan was presented by the Ministry of the Interior on the basis of Government Resolution No 71 of 18 February 2015. This strategic document builds upon the priorities identified in the Strategy and its main objective is to prevent prejudices, stereotypes and hate speech based on national, racial, ethnic, religious or other similar intolerance, as well as to prevent the emergence and spread of attitudes and activities aimed at promoting racism, xenophobia and other forms of intolerance.

Through Government Resolution No 5 of 13 January 2016, the Government approved the 2016-2019 Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination submitted by the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic and Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic based on Government Resolution No 71 of 18 February 2015. The purpose of the Action Plan is to focus on awareness-raising with regard to non-discrimination and endeavour to streamline the implementation of anti-discrimination legislation, as well as to bring back the practice from previous years by adopting a strategic document with a general focus on this area. This Action Plan follows from the previous strategic documents in the area of prevention of discrimination and promotion of equal opportunities, in particular the Action Plan for the Prevention of All Forms of Discrimination, Racism, Xenophobia, Anti-Semitism and Other Expressions of Intolerance.

1.2. International commitments of the Slovak Republic in the area of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities

In accordance with the statute, the Plenipotentiary participates in the development of reports on the implementation of international treaties relating to the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities and binding on the Slovak Republic. In this regard, the Office of the Plenipotentiary continued to cooperate with the MFEA SR in 2015 in the drafting of reports and conducting a dialogue on the implementation of the commitments arising from Council of Europe and UN human right conventions, as well as the implementation of commitments arising from bilateral agreements.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary took part in the 4th monitoring cycle under the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (hereinafter also the 'Framework Convention'), the review of the results of the 3rd cycle of monitoring of the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (hereinafter the 'Language Charter'), the preparation of the Fourth Report on the Implementation of the Language Charter, the review of the conclusions of the 5th cycle of monitoring by the European Commission against Racism and Intolerance, the review of the recommendations from the 2nd cycle of the universal periodic review by the UN Human Rights Council, and the preparation and organisation of the XIIIth session of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission for National Minorities, Education and Culture.

1.2.1 International treaties

1.2.1.1 Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities

The fourth cycle of monitoring of the Slovak Republic formally started in 2014 by presenting the Fourth Periodic Report of the Slovak Republic on the Implementation of the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. In September 2014, the Advisory Committee on the Framework Convention paid a visit to the Slovak Republic in the context of the fourth cycle of monitoring of the implementation of the commitments. On the basis of the Fourth Periodic Report of the Slovak Republic and the results of the visit, on 3 December 2014 the Advisory Committee adopted its opinion on the Slovak Republic to which the Slovak Republic responded with its position. The ongoing fourth cycle of monitoring will be formally completed by adopting a resolution by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, which will contain recommendations for improving the implementation of the Framework Convention in the Slovak Republic.

February 2015 marked the 20th anniversary of opening for signature of the Framework Convention. The Slovak Republic, being one of the first countries to ratify the Framework Convention, appreciated its contribution to the effective protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and to the development of cooperation between European democracies.

1.2.1.2 European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages

The Slovak Republic is currently in the fourth cycle of monitoring of the implementation of its commitments arising from the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Language Charter has a three-year monitoring cycle. Monitoring begins by presenting the implementation report by the State under evaluation on the current

situation and developments in legislation and practice in the area of the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages. The submission of the implementation report is followed by a visit to the country under evaluation by the Committee of Experts, which is an independent body comprising experts from the Member States of the Council of Europe. The conclusions of the Committee of Experts, together with the implementation report, form a basis for drawing up the evaluation report on the application of the Language Charter in the State in question. Based on the report, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe adopts recommendations addressed to the State in question, thereby concluding the given monitoring cycle.

In accordance with the Council of Europe's methodological guide, the MFEA SR, the body responsible for the convention, prepared the fourth report on the implementation of the Language Charter in the Slovak Republic approved by the Government through Resolution No 131 of 18 March 2015. The report was presented to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe on 30 March 2015. The implementation report was elaborated on the basis of supporting documents from the relevant authorities of the State administration. The recommendation of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe on the implementation of the Language Charter in the Slovak Republic served as a starting point for the preparation of the report, as did the evaluation report of the Committee of Experts of Language Charter from the third monitoring cycle. The fourth report contains updated comprehensive information on the status and situation of minority languages in the Slovak Republic and focuses above all on the presentation of the current state and developments in legislation and social practice in the area of the protection and promotion of regional or minority languages.

The presentation of the fourth periodic report was followed on 21-23 September 2015 by a visit of the Committee of Experts of the Language Charter to the Slovak Republic to obtain detailed information about the standard of implementation of the Language Charter. The first two days were dedicated to meetings with representatives of national minorities and included a visit to Košice. In the interest of a balanced approach, this part of the visit was organised separately by the Language Charter experts, without any participation by State institutions. The questions and suggestions that emerged from these meetings were passed on by the members of the delegation and discussed with representatives of the various State administration authorities whose scope of competence includes the implementation of the individual commitments arising from the Language Charter. In the course of the visit, the members of the Committee of Experts expressed their appreciation of the cooperation and dialogue with the Slovak Republic in the process of monitoring of the implementation of the Language Charter.

During the visit of the members of the Committee of Experts, Mária Jedličková, the acting Plenipotentiary of the Government for national minorities, actively participated in the discussions between the Committee of Experts and representatives of central government authorities. The members of the delegation led by Mr Jarmo Lainio, member of the Committee of Experts for Sweden, comprised Fernando Ramallo Fernández, member of the Committee of Experts for Spain, and Alexander Bröstl, member of the Committee of Experts for the Slovak Republic. The visit provided an opportunity for discussions with representatives of the State institutions responsible for the implementation of the Language Charter and representatives of organisations promoting the protection of minority languages in the Slovak Republic. The information obtained about the implementation of the Language Charter in the Slovak Republic will serve as a source for drawing up the fourth evaluation report on Slovakia. Maria Jedličková informed the guests about the activities and progress made by the Office of the Plenipotentiary in the process of recognition of the Russian and

Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of Part II of the Language Charter.

The processes of recognition of the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of Part II of the Language Charter were taking place in parallel in 2015. The proposal to recognise the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of Part II of the Language Charter was approved by the Government through Resolution No 618 of 18 November 2015. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe was notified of this information by the permanent representative of the Slovak Republic to the Council of Europe through a letter dated 25 November 2015 (for more details, see Part V Use of National Minority Languages).

In the course of 2015, the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups and the Council of the Government for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality regularly discussed detailed information about the course of the process of recognition of the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic within the meaning of Part II of the Language Charter, as well as information about the course of the ongoing fourth cycle of monitoring of the implementation of the commitments arising for the Slovak Republic from the Language Charter.

The conclusions of the Committee of Experts, together with the implementation report, form a basis for drawing up the evaluation report on the application of the Language Charter in the given State, which can attach its opinion to the report. The evaluation report of the Committee of Experts on the implementation of the Language Charter in the Slovak Republic was adopted at the 52nd session of the Committee of Experts on 6 November 2015. The Slovak Republic made use of the possibility to send its opinion in response to the report, which will be made public together with the report. The current monitoring cycle will be completed by adopting recommendations by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe.

1.2.2 International mechanisms for verifying respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities

1.2.2.1 Universal periodic review by the UN Human Rights Council and the implementation of universal human rights conventions

The universal periodic review (UPR) is a special mechanism of the UN Human Rights Council, which has been in place since 2008. This is a universal process, in which the State concerned is evaluated by other Member States. The aim of the review is to provide a comprehensive and objective picture of the state of human rights in all UN Member States. The review follows a regular 4.5-year cycle. From the perspective of the human rights agenda, the UPR is a key event at national level.

In February 2014, the Slovak Republic was subject of the second cycle of the UPR. The Slovak Republic did not accept 9 and partially accepted 4 of the 146 recommendations. At the same time, in its opinion on the recommendations, the Slovak Republic declared its voluntary commitments in the human rights area. One of the voluntary commitments was that the Slovak Republic would submit to the Committee information about the implementation of the recommendations after a half of the review cycle, i.e. after approximately 2.5 years. In the second half of 2015, the MFEA SR, in cooperation with the relevant central government authorities, commenced work on a report on the implementation of the recommendations. Eight of the 146 recommendations addressed to the Slovak Republic

were identified by the Office of the Plenipotentiary as ones that directly relate to the issue of national minorities and it prepared a document on the methods and mechanisms for their implementation. The report should be presented to the UN Human Rights Council during the first half of 2016.

The Slovak Republic is a party to almost all of the fundamental UN human rights treaties and it responds very flexibly to the developments in this area. In 2015, it became a State Party to the International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance of 20 December 2007, which came into force for Slovakia on 14 January 2015.

In July 2015, the Slovak Republic successfully presented its third report on the implementation of the Convention Against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. The recommendations adopted by the Committee concerned, in particular, the protection of the rights of detained and imprisoned persons, living conditions of prisoners, protection of migrants and asylum-seekers, measures to protect women against violence and the Slovak Republic's policy in relation to the victims of the crime of trafficking in human beings. Equally, the Committee was interested in the situation of Roma, in particular the police operations in Roma settlements that had appeared in the media, education of Roma children, the functioning of the Roma civil patrols and investigation into the sterilisations of Roma women. The Committee appreciated the progress achieved by the Slovak Republic in the field of the fight against domestic violence and education of Roma children in the context of their enrolment in special schools or classes.

In November 2015, the Slovak Republic successfully presented its fifth and sixth periodic report on the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women. During the examination of the report before the Committee, the situation of Roma women in various areas of life, in particular education, healthcare and employment, as well as issues related to multiple discrimination, were at the forefront. The Committee recommended that the Slovak Republic adopt measures to promote gender equality and eliminate discrimination against women in virtually all areas of life (for example in access to justice, education, healthcare, employment, participation in political and public life). The recommendations are dominated by the situation of Roma women as victims of multiple discrimination. Certain progress was achieved with regard to the sterilisations of Roma women. Even though recommendations concerning sterilisations of Roma women without informed consent were addressed to the Slovak Republic by the Committee, it no longer demanded investigations of such cases, unlike in the summer of 2015 when Slovakia's third implementation report was examined before the Committee against Torture. The Committee particularly welcomed the Slovak Republic's commitment to ratify the Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence (Istanbul Convention) by June 2016.

In April 2015, the Slovak Republic presented to the relevant Committee its fourth implementation report concerning the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and is awaiting the date of examination of the report.

1.2.2.2 Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Issues

Bilateral cooperation with Hungary is based on the Treaty on Good Neighbourly Relations and Friendly Cooperation signed on 19 March 1995. The most recent XIIth session of the Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Issues was held on 11 December 2013 in Bratislava. The session was interrupted due to a number of open issues. In August 2015, the Hungarian Embassy in Bratislava provided the information that Ferenc

András Kalmár, the Commissioner for Hungary's Neighbourhood Policy of the Ministry of External Economic Relations and Foreign Affairs of Hungary, was appointed a new co-chairperson of the Hungarian part of the mixed commission. The next session of the Mixed Slovak-Hungarian Commission for Minority Issues is expected to be held in the course of 2016.

1.2.2.3 Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education and Culture

Bilateral cooperation with Ukraine is based on the Treaty on Good Neighbourliness, Friendly Relations and Cooperation between the Slovak Republic and Ukraine (Kiev, 29.6.1993). In accordance with this Treaty and on the initiative of the Ukrainian party (during the official visit by Minister of Foreign Affairs of Ukraine A. Zlenka to the Slovak Republic in February 1994), the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education, Culture and Scientific Contacts was set up through Government Resolution No 362/1994. In agreement with the Ukrainian party, since 2003, the Commission carries the name Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education and Culture. The Commission's meetings take place once a year, alternately in the Slovak Republic and in Ukraine.

Through Resolution No 161/2015 of 8.4.2015, the Government approved the 'Report on the Course and Results of the XIIIth Session of the Intergovernmental Slovak-Ukrainian Commission on National Minorities, Education and Culture, 8-9.12.2014, Kiev' taking note of the information about the course and outcomes of the Commission's work and tasked the relevant members of the Government, the Chairperson of the Office for Slovaks Living Abroad and the Plenipotentiary of the Government for national minorities to familiarise themselves with the conclusions and recommendations of the Slovak-Ukrainian Commission and, within the scope of their competence and existing possibilities, support and evaluate progress of implementation of the proposed recommendations.

Last year, the Office of the Plenipotentiary worked intensely together with the MFEA SR to implement the recommendations and tasks arising from the above. The MFEA SR, in cooperation with the relevant ministries and State administration and self-government authorities and institutions, including the Office of the Plenipotentiary, continuously monitored the implementation of these tasks.

At a unilateral meeting in December 2015, the Slovak party prepared a review of the tasks adopted as listed in the Protocol from the joint session of the Slovak and Ukrainian parties in Kiev (2014) and approved by the Government (2015) and invited the members of the commission to evaluate the adopted recommendations with a view to providing comprehensive information to the Ukrainian party before the joint session of both parts of the commission in the first half of 2016 in Bratislava.

The Commission deals with the complex issue of the Slovak national minority in Ukraine and the Ukrainian national minority in the Slovak Republic with the aim of promoting the preservation and development of their identities and cultures. In addition, it monitors the overall bilateral relations in the fields of culture, education, science, research and national minority education and pays attention to supporting national minority media and exchanges of programming between RTVS and its media partners in Ukraine. After each meeting of the Commission, the MFEA SR presents at a Government's session information

about the course of the Commission's deliberations, the conclusions adopted and the implementation of conclusions in the preceding period.

1.2.2.4 Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights

Council of Europe Commissioner for Human Rights Nils Muižnieks carried out a visit to the Slovak Republic from 15 to 19 June 2015. This was the Commissioner's regular visit to a Council of Europe member state to monitor the situation in the development of human rights. Subsequently, in October 2015, he issued a report on his visit to the Slovak Republic in which the standard of adherence to human rights is evaluated and recommendations as to how to improve and develop it further are proposed. The report focuses on the following topics: work for the implementation of human rights, action against discrimination of Roma, discrimination against persons with disabilities and discrimination against lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and intersex (LGBTI) persons. The greatest attention is paid to the status of the Roma minority and the major legislative recommendations relate to, in particular, the agenda of the rights of LGBTI persons. In his report, the Commissioner does not pay special attention to the situation of national minorities, except the Roma minority. The Commissioner's report was discussed by the Government Council in December 2015.

Part II – Participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance

The participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance is guaranteed under the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, which, under Article 34(2)(c), **guarantees citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups the right to participate in addressing matters relating to national minorities and ethnic groups.**

The fundamental rights conferred by Article 34(2) of the Constitution are also guaranteed under the **Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities**. According to Article 15 of the Framework Convention, the Parties must create the conditions necessary for the effective participation of persons belonging to national minorities in cultural, social and economic life and in public affairs, in particular those affecting them. The objective of such effective participation is to encourage real equality between persons belonging to national minorities and those forming part of the majority by promoting consultation with these persons, by means of appropriate procedures and through their representative institutions. The role of the representative and consultation institution in the Slovak Republic is played by the **Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups**, which is an expert body of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality – an advisory body to the Government of the Slovak Republic.

The legislation governing the right to vote fully respects the provisions of Article 30 of the Constitution of the Slovak Republic, under which citizens have access to elected and other public offices under equal conditions, while the right to vote is universal, equal, direct and exercised by secret ballot. In addition to nationals, the right to participate in public governance in the Slovak Republic directly or by means of a free vote is also granted to foreign nationals with permanent residence in its territory, namely in municipal elections and in elections to the bodies of self-governing regions.

The Plenipotentiary's Report focuses on the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in the State's mechanisms of consultation with persons belonging to national minorities. In view of the fact that no national elections were held in 2015, the report does not provide any information regarding the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in this area.

2.1 Activities of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities in the area of participation of persons belonging to national minorities

The promotion of participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance is one of the areas of competence of the Plenipotentiary who, within the meaning of the statute, is tasked with duties in the area of preserving, developing and promoting the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and implementing systemic measures to improve their situation. In this regard, the Plenipotentiary, in particular, chairs the Committee, holds regular consultations with persons belonging to national minorities and organisations of national minorities and promotes greater participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance.

In 2015, acting Plenipotentiary Mária Jedličková took the initiative to organise a number of professional events (workshops, working meetings, cultural events, etc.) with the aim of engaging persons belonging to national minorities in the discussion on the current

topics of the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, as well as the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities.

At the invitation of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities and Chairperson of the Committee Mária Jedličková, representatives of the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner paid a working visit to the Office of the Plenipotentiary. During the visit, which took place on 19 February 2015, the guests - Stéphanie Marsal political advisor to the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities and Veronika Kristková from the High Commissioner's Office held discussions with representatives of both national minorities and the Office of the Plenipotentiary. At their meeting, acting Plenipotentiary Mária Jedličková and political advisor to OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities Stéphanie Marsal exchanged information about the activities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary, in particular, the grant programme promoting the development of traditions, culture and languages of national minorities and the situation of national minorities in the Slovak Republic. Stéphanie Marsal underscored the participatory mechanism in the area of respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities, in particular through the Office of the Plenipotentiary and the Committee. She particularly commended the Plenipotentiary's work and expressed her interest in keeping track of the developments in the areas of competence of the Office of the Plenipotentiary in the future. On the same day, the XVIth session of the Committee took place in the premises of the Office of the Government; at the invitation of the Plenipotentiary, Veronika Kristková from the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities attended this session as an observer.

In the context of consultations with persons belonging to national minorities, the Office of the Plenipotentiary, in response to an initiative of the Ruthenian and Ukrainian minorities, organised a joint working meeting between representatives of these minorities, which was held on 25 March 2015 in Banská Bystrica. The purpose of the working meeting was to initiate consultations and open discussion on sensitive topics of the relations between these two minorities.

On 14 April 2015, Maria Jedličková received Klaus Brähmig, chairman of the Bundestag group for issues of displaced persons and national minorities, together with a delegation of MPs and Thomas Götz, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Slovakia. The main topic of the meeting was the mutual exchange of information on the promotion of the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia and in the Federal Republic of Germany.



Source: Office of the Government archives

Last year, the Office of the Plenipotentiary, in collaboration with its partners, organised the ninth edition of the European cinema minifestival 7x7. The festival was opened on 6 May 2015 in the Mladost' cinema in Bratislava. This traditional event took place under the auspices of Robert Fico, the Prime Minister of the Slovak Republic, Mária Jedličková, the acting Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic and Dušan Chrenek, the Head of Representation of the European Commission in Slovakia. Last year's edition was unique in that it focused on the issue of minorities in the context of their coexistence with the majority, as well as tolerance and inclusion in the society.



Source: Office of the Government archives

Mária Jedličková's meeting with Hartmut Koschyk, Federal Government Commissioner for Matters Related to Repatriates and National Minorities in Germany and Bundestag MP and J. E. Thomas Götz, the Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Slovakia, held on 24 June 2015 was dominated by the issues of the situation of the German minority in the Slovak Republic, the promotion of cultural activities of the German minority

in Slovakia, as well as the intensification of mutual cooperation in the promotion of the German national minority in the Slovak Republic.

The Office of the Plenipotentiary, in cooperation with the Office of the Government, organised the cultural event ‘Evening of Music and Dance of National Minorities’, which took place on 25 September 2015 in the Culture House in Jarovce under the auspices of Prime Minister of the Government of the Slovak Republic Robert Fico. The audience had the opportunity to see a unique combination of performances by two professional ensembles with a 60-year tradition. In their varied multicultural programme, the IfjúSzivek dance theatre and the Poddukelský umelecký ľudový súbor folk art ensemble presented music and dances of various ethnic minorities from different corners of Slovakia. It was not coincidence that the event took place in the municipality of Jarovce, which has been a home to persons of different nationalities, ethnicities and religions since time immemorial. Jarovce is a true crossroad of nations and nationalities in Central Europe and even today it is a tolerant, modern and multicultural community, which can serve as a model for other places and municipalities in Slovakia and in Europe. The ‘Evening of Music and Dance of National Minorities’ presented to the audience the wealth and diversity of the traditions and art of national minorities living in Slovakia.



Source: Office of the Government archives

Workshops on the draft Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, organised by the Committee’s Temporary Working Group to formulate the draft and composed of representatives of national minorities and the State administration (see 1.1.1 Strategic and Policy Documents) were held on 5 November 2015 in Banská Bystrica, 6 February 2015 in Košice and 9 February 2015 in Bratislava.



Source: Office of the Government archives

In order to ensure public information about the activities of the Office of the Plenipotentiary and the Committee, the website at www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk was regularly updated in 2015 to reflect interactively the most recent information relating to the Office of the Plenipotentiary, statements of the Plenipotentiary on memorial days, as well as information about events of national minority organisations, both for persons belonging to national minorities and the majority society.³

The **Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups** is an important participative mechanism. The Office of the Plenipotentiary, acting as the Committee's secretariat, continued to ensure the proper functioning of the Committee in 2015 (see 2.2.2 Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups).



Source: Office of the Government archives

³See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/>

2.2 Consultation mechanisms

2.2.1 Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality

The Council of the Government is a standing expert, advisory, coordinating and consultative body of the Government for the protection of fundamental human rights and freedoms, political and civil rights, the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups, economic, social and cultural rights, the right to the protection of the environment and cultural heritage, children's rights and respect for the best interests of the child, the rights of persons with disabilities and of senior citizens, and for the promotion of the principle of equal treatment, equal opportunities and gender equality.

Members of the Council include the Plenipotentiary and the Deputy Chairperson of the Committee representing a national minority or ethnic group. In 2015, the Committee's 2014 evaluation reports on the promotion of the culture of national minorities, national minority education and the use of national minority languages, as well as the 'Proposal to Recognise the Russian Language and the Serbian Language as Minority Languages in the Slovak Republic within the Meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages' were presented at a session of the Council by Plenipotentiary Mária Jedličková and Deputy Chairperson of the Committee Pavel Traubner.

In 2015, an amendment to Act No 575/2001 Coll. on the organisation of government activities and the organisation of central government, as amended, was adopted. The amendment defined the general competence to formulate and implement the State policy in the field of human rights, which has been entrusted to the Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic, including the coordination competence previously exercised by the MFEA SR; the Minister of Justice of the Slovak Republic became the Chairperson of the Council of the Government of the Slovak Republic for Human Rights, National Minorities and Gender Equality.

2.2.2 Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups

The Committee is an institutionalised consultation mechanism on matters of participation of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups in addressing matters that concern them. The Committee is the Council's standing expert body for issues relating to national minorities and ethnic groups and persons belonging to them in the area of the implementation of the Language Charter within the meaning of Article 7(4) of the Charter and Article 15 of the Framework Convention.

The Committee is chaired by the Plenipotentiary and its members include representatives of all thirteen national minorities (Hungarian, Roma, Ruthenian, Czech, Ukrainian, German, Polish, Moravian, Russian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Jewish and Serbian) and representatives of the relevant government authorities:

- MFEA SR,
- Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MESRS SR'),
- Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MC SR'),
- Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Family of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MLSAF SR'),
- Ministry of the Interior of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MI SR'),
- Ministry of Justice of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MJ SR'),

- Plenipotentiary of the Government for Roma Communities.

National minorities are represented on the Committee as follows:

- 5 representatives of the Hungarian national minority,
- 4 representatives of the Roma national minority,
- 2 representatives of the Czech national minority,
- 2 representatives of the Ruthenian national minority,
- 2 representatives of the Ukrainian national minority,
- 1 representative of the German national minority,
- 1 representative of the Polish national minority,
- 1 representative of the Moravian national minority,
- 1 representative of the Russian national minority,
- 1 representative of the Bulgarian national minority,
- 1 representative of the Croatian national minority,
- 1 representative of the Jewish national minority,
- 1 representative of the Serbian national minority.

The Committee, above all, presents suggestions, within the scope of its competence, aimed at increasing the standard of the promotion, protection and respect for the rights of persons belonging to national minorities; it participates in the drafting of reports under the control mechanisms of international treaties on human rights and rights of persons belonging to national minorities and draws up annual evaluation reports on the key areas relating to persons belonging to national minorities, which are presented to the Council for approval.

The Committee has a specific position among the Council's committees. The members of the Committee representing persons belonging to national minorities are elected directly by national minority organisations. Only the representatives of national minorities and the Chairperson of the Committee have voting rights using the 'one vote per minority' principle. Representatives of government authorities take part in the Committee's sessions without the right to vote. Hence, the Committee can be considered as a self-governing authority of national minorities, which decides on its own matters independently and sovereignly. The issues of a particular minority are not dealt with at the Committee's sessions unless a representative of that minority is present at the session.

At the invitation of the Plenipotentiary, a visit by Mrs Stéphanie Marsal, the political advisor to OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, and Mrs Veronika Kristková from the Office of the OSCE High Commissioner on National Minorities, took place on 19 February 2015. Mrs Veronika Kristková also attended the XVIth session of the Committee as an observer (for further details, please see 2.1 Activities of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities in the area of participation of persons belonging to national minorities).

Last year, specifically on 16 September 2015, the Committee held an election session to elect two alternate members of the Committee for the Roma national minority and one alternate member for the Jewish national minority as the mandate of the former alternate members was to expire in October 2015. The candidates for alternate members of the Committee were proposed by the respective national minorities. The election session, attended by a notary, was overseen by an electoral committee comprising representatives of the State administration and institutions active in the field of human rights. The nominees who received the largest number of votes from national minority organisations were appointed alternate members of the Committee by the Chairperson.

Due to the resignation of a member of the Committee representing the Ruthenian national minority, on 18 December 2015 a call was made for the registration of candidate lists and national minority organisations to participate in a session an alternate member of the Committee for the vacant post, who took over the vacant post in accordance with the Committee's statute. The election session was held on 28 January 2016.

In 2015, the Committee held four regular and one extraordinary session and adopted a total of 17 resolutions (resolutions 63 – 79). All of the resolutions and minutes of the Committee's sessions have been posted on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary.⁴

Based on its statute, the Committee draws up annual evaluation reports on the promotion of cultures of national minorities, the state of national minority education and the use of national minority languages (hereinafter collectively as 'evaluation reports'), which are presented to the Council for approval. On the proposal of the Chairperson of the Committee, in the interest of streamlining and ensuring the participatory nature of the process of preparation of the evaluation reports for 2014, a temporary working group, comprising 13 representatives of the various national minorities – experts on the relevant issues, and 8 representatives of the State administration, was set up and drew up the reports. The representatives of national minorities were nominated by members of the Committee and the Chairperson of the Committee fully accepted these nominations. The Council of the Government approved the evaluation reports at its 22nd session through Resolution No 137 of 15 October 2015.

As regards policy documents, the Committee participated in the preparation of the draft 2016-2020 Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups, which follows directly from the draft National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic (for further details, please see part 1.1.1 Strategic and policy documents and action plans).

In the area of promoting the culture of persons belonging to national minorities, in 2015 the Committee continued to be regularly updated on the grant programme of the Office of the Government – the Culture of National Minorities (hereinafter the 'CNM') and approved the distribution of the available funding among the individual national minorities in 2016. The Committee was also informed about the structure of RTVS national minority broadcasting and dealt with the issue of national minority museums.

In the area of the language rights of persons belonging to national minorities, the Committee discussed and approved the proposal to recognise the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic within the meaning of Part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages (for further details, please see Part V – The use of national minority languages). The Committee also expressed its support for the Hungarian minority's requirements regarding the improvement of the standard of the education and training process in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction and requested that the requirements in question be also taken into account in respect of other national minorities.

The Committee discussed all the reports as required under its statute and the statute of the Plenipotentiary.

⁴ See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/vybor-pre-narodnostne-mensiny-a-etnicke-skupiny/>

Overview of the resolutions adopted by the Committee in 2015:

Through **Resolution No 63** of 19 February 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information about the proposed structure of the Committee’s 2014 evaluation reports on the promotion of cultures of national minorities, the state of national minority education and the use of national minority languages’ and recommended that the Chairperson of the Committee set up a working group comprising representatives of each national minority and representatives of State administration – the MESRS SR, MC SR, MLSAF SR, MFEA SR, MJ SR and the Office of the Government in order to draw up the Committee’s 2014 evaluation reports.

Through **Resolution No 64** of 19 February 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on proposals from members of the Committee regarding the Committee’s agenda and system of voting’.

Through **Resolution No 65** of 19 February 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information about the 2015 Culture of National Minorities grant programme’.

Through **Resolution No 66** of 18 May 2015, the Committee approved the 2014 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities within the meaning of Article 4(1)(a) of the Statute of the Plenipotentiary of the Government of the Slovak Republic for National Minorities.

Through **Resolution No 67** of 18 May 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on the preparation of the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups and tasked the Chairperson of the Committee to set up a temporary working group to prepare the draft plan comprising five State administration representatives (MC SR, MESRS SR, MI SR, the Office of the Government and the Office of the Plenipotentiary) and five experts on the rights of persons belonging to national minorities and ethnic groups nominated by members of the Committee, by the deadline of 31 May 2015.

Through **Resolution No 68** of 18 May 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on the provision of grants under the 2015 Culture of National Minorities (CNM) programme’ and recommended that the Committee’s Secretariat organise a working meeting of CMN grant beneficiaries proposed by members of the Committee with the aim of simplifying the criteria for the provision of CNM grants.

Through **Resolution No 69** of 18 May 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on the preparatory process relating to the potential recognition of Russian and Serbian as minority languages within the meaning of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages’.

Through **Resolution No 70** of 9 October 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Call for applications for grants under the 2016 Culture of National Minorities grant programme’.

Through **Resolution No 71** of 9 October 2015, the Committee approved the 2014 Evaluation Report on the Promotion of National Minority Cultures; 2014 Report on the State of National Minority Education; 2014 Report on the Use of National Minority Languages, and tasked the Chairperson of the Committee to present the report for approval by the Council of the Government.

Through **Resolution No 72** of 9 October 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on the working meeting organised in accordance with the Committee’s Resolution No 68 of 18 May 2015’.

Through **Resolution No 73** of 9 October 2015, the Committee approved the document ‘Proposal to recognise the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic within the meaning of Part II of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages’.

Through **Resolution No 74** of 9 October 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on the election of alternate members of the Committee’.

Through **Resolution No 75** of 9 October 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on the preparation of the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups’.

Through **Resolution No 76** of 9 October 2015, the Committee approved the following position concerning the requirements of the Hungarian national minority in the area of national minority education: “The members of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups whom the matter concerns fully support the requirements of the Hungarian national minority formulated in the petition for the improvement of the education and training process in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction and presented to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport of the Slovak Republic on 28.5.2015, as well as the Opinion issued at the meeting on this matter held on 25.9.2015 in Komárno. At the same time, the Committee requests that the relevant requirements be also taken into account in relation to other national minorities and tasks the Chairperson of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups to present, within the scope of the competence of the Plenipotentiary of the Government for National Minorities, the opinion of the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups to the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport and initiate joint discussions between the Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport and representatives of national minorities whom national minority education concerns with a view to amending the relevant legislation”.

Through **Resolution No 77** of 17 December 2015, the Committee approved its 2016 Plan of Activities.

Through **Resolution No 78** of 17 December 2015, the Committee took note of the ‘Information on the 2015 Culture of National Minorities grant programme’, approved the distribution of the funding available for the 2016 Culture of National Minorities programme to the individual national minorities and recommended that the Chairperson of the Committee set up a working group to analyse and propose the priorities of support for national minority cultures.

Through **Resolution No 79** of 17 December 2015, the Committee approved the draft 2016-2020 Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups.



Source: Office of the Government archives



Source: Office of the Government archives

Part III – Promoting the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of persons belonging to national minorities

The EUR 3 879 250-worth Culture of National Minorities grant programme of the Office of the Government, which falls under the responsibility of the Plenipotentiary, played a key role in promoting the expression, protection and development of identity and cultural values of persons belonging to national minorities in 2015. The programme also served as a means to pursue other objectives, such as education and training on the rights of national minorities and promotion of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between the majority community and national minorities and ethnic groups.

In this area, the MC SR performed tasks defined under the Competences Act. These tasks related to, above all, the operation of specialised national minority museums, as well as the drafting of legislation and strategic documents in the area of the media and audio-visuals (national minority broadcasting), the State language in relation to the use of national minority languages, libraries (development of library holdings in minority languages), the traditional folk culture and other areas.

3.1 Support provided within the network of cultural centres and libraries

The **National Edification Centre** (hereinafter ‘NEC’) supports the culture of national minorities through its methodological, advice, educational and implementation activities.⁵ In 2015, it prepared, implemented and participated in a number of activities focusing on the development of the culture of national minorities.

In 2015, the NEC and Romano kher – the Roma House, held another edition of the national competition for children **Colourful World – Coloriskeriluma**. The objective of the competition was to bring children from the Roma minority and the majority community closer together by learning about the Roma culture and motivate pupils to formulate creatively, through their literary and art activities, their ideas and opinions about the coexistence between the Roma national minority and the majority society. The competition encourages children from the majority community to learn about and accept the culture of the minority Roma population and confront the newly acquired knowledge with their own knowledge and experience; it also allows Roma children to integrate. In 2015, culture and edification establishments and non-governmental organisations also participated in the implementation of the **Colourful World – Coloriskeriluma** competition, which was implemented with financial support from the 2015 Culture of National Minorities programme of the Office of the Government and from the MESRS SR.

Every year, presentation of the culture of national minorities forms part of the **Východná** folklore festival. At its 61st edition, dances of the Jewish minority were presented in the **Urodenuo** programme. Dances of national minorities – the dances of Vlach Roma of Kendice and Petrovany, Ruthenian dances *holubka* and *huculka* and others – were taught in the dance schools and dance houses at the **Východná** folklore festival. Craft skills in the traditional craft of bell-making were presented by a representative of the Hungarian national minority, Alexander Bodó of Šamorín. In an article entitled ‘Jednoducho pohoda’ [Simply good time], published in issue 2/2015 of the **Národná osveta** magazine (pp 8-12), E. Bartko

⁵ For more information about the NEC’s tasks in the field of culture of national minorities, see the 2014 report at http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/data/files/5935_sprava-o-nm_2014-sk.pdf

also wrote about the importance of the performances by national minorities at the Východná folklore festival.

The MC SR has designated the NEC to hold and act as the expert patron of the nationwide multi-round competition and show of folk dance solo performers **Šaffova ostroha** with international participation and participation of dancers from national minorities. Presentation of folk dances of national minorities living in Slovakia significantly enriches the competition. This year, the national round was attended by nine contestants of Hungarian and four contestants of Ruthenian nationality. The members of the jury included representatives of national minorities. The events organised by the NEC in the context of the **Days of Traditional Culture** project – ‘Malí tanečníci a Primášikovia’ [Small Dancers and Little Bandmasters] – are also open to persons belonging to national minorities. Nevertheless, in 2015 no persons belonging to national minorities attended the creative workshops. Young Roma authors from Rimavská Sobota and a member of the Hungarian national minority from Komárno presented their work in 2015 in **CINEAMA**, the national competition of amateur films held by the National Edification Centre. In 2015, the NEC also organised a multi-round national competition and exhibition of amateur photography **AMFO**. The participants included young Roma authors from Žilina and members of photo clubs from Komárno, Nové Zámky and Galanta, many of whose members are members from the Hungarian minority. One of the laureates of the national multi-round competition of children’s folklore ensembles ‘Pod likavským hradom’ [Under the Likava Castle] was the Malá Rakonca ensemble from Fiľakovo (choreography: Lia Varga).

The issue of persons belonging to national minorities was also the subject of an article in issue 1/2015 of the professional magazine **Sociálna prevencia** published by the NEC: Kriminalita Rómov (?) [Roma Crime (?)], Kozubík, M. and Rác, I. (pp 18-19).

In 2015, NEC personnel took active part in the process of evaluation of the projects submitted under the CNM programme as members of evaluation panels to assess the grant application projects.

Libraries

Long-term State statistical surveys in the area of culture (within the meaning of Act No 540/2001 Coll. on State statistics, as amended), which also concerns the activities of libraries, are annually conducted by the MC SR. The statistical surveys for 2015 are currently at the stage of preparations for data collection, which will be followed by further data processing stages.⁶

In 2015, the **University Library in Bratislava** (hereinafter the ‘ULB’) organised the following cultural activities in the context of ensuring the accessibility of culture to national minorities: **Takí ako my** [Those who are like us] – an exhibition of young Roma photographers from Vtáčkovce; **O kultúrnej a etnickej rozmanitosti** [About cultural and ethnic diversity] – film screenings for gymnasia students from the cycle ‘Ethnofilm for schools’; Letné Literárne Láskanie – **Kolik příležitostí má růže** [Summer Literary Caressing - How many opportunities a rose has] - 7th annual summer literature project – the poetry of Moravian poet Jan Skácel; **Rilke – básnik nášho srdca** [Rilke - the poet of our hearts] – dedicated to the 140th anniversary of the birth of the greatest German poet of the 20th century who significantly influenced modern poetry in the world – Rainer Maria Rilke; **Eva**

⁶ For more information about the development of library holdings, please see the 2014 Report of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities.

Rossmann: Fadenkreuz – excerpts from the successful crime novel in interpretation by the German-writing author.

In the context of expansion of library holdings, the ULB acquired translations of works from minority languages into Slovak. The ULB provides access to unique databases of periodicals and sources of information (biographical and bibliographic databases) in electronic form. For example, the **Library Press Display** service offers on-line access to over 2200 newspapers from 97 countries in 54 languages. All newspaper titles are published on-line in their original graphical form and format, including photographs, almost immediately after publication in the country of origin. The offer of newspapers is constantly expanding in terms of both titles and countries. Minority language newspapers include, for example, ÚJ SZÓ in Hungarian or MF DNES, Rytmus života and Dnes in Czech. Periodicals in German, Russian and other languages are also available. Full text access to archives is available for 90 days, both in the premises of the library and by means of remote access. An equally exceptional database with full text access made available by the library is the **Central and Eastern European Online Library**, which is a platform for providing access to digitised technical and scientific magazines from Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe focusing on humanities and social sciences, which are difficult to access in paper or electronic form (1 100 titles, of which more than 40 are Czech, 36 are Hungarian and more than 10 are peer-reviewed titles devoted to the issue of Roma). Specialised periodicals from the area of social sciences are available in the languages of Central, Eastern and South-Eastern Europe and in English. In addition to access in ULB's premises, remote access is provided to registered users: <http://www.ulib.sk/sk/e-pramene/zoznam-pramene/>. At the same time, bibliographies are available – records of books published in the Czech Republic, Hungary, Germany, Poland and other European countries. Links to e-books and databases in minority languages are available at: <http://www.ulib.sk/sk/e-kniznica/elektronicke-kniznice/e-knihy/>. Through its special collections of books and media, the ULB builds partial foreign libraries, such as the Austrian Library and the project of a Czech library in the UCB; on the initiative of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Slovak Republic, the UCB plans to reopen the Centre of Russian Studies (temporarily suspended due to a lack of interest from the Russian party, the initiative was renewed in early 2016).

The **Slovak National Library** promoted the availability of the culture of national minorities, in particular, in the area of acquiring and promoting literature published in minority languages. In 2015, the holdings of the Slovak National Library included 443 documents issued by national minorities (25 documents issued by the German, 146 by the Hungarian, 8 by the Polish, 164 by the Ruthenian, 4 by the Ukrainian and 96 by the Czech national minority). In 2015, this institution acquired a total of **98 magazines relating to the culture and languages of national minorities** (1 Bulgarian, 2 Croatian, 1 Jewish, 13 German, 49 Hungarian, 1 Polish, 19 Ruthenian, 4 Ukrainian, 4 Czech and 4 Roma). The additions to the library holdings were regularly exhibited in the Slovak National Library's lending room and universal reading room. **8 research projects** on the subject of national minorities were completed. The library continuously creates and builds a bibliography of national minorities in the Slovak Republic in the context of the NB SNK Catalogue (2015). It processes all types of documents on this topic. As part of the library's database and the Digital Library, it develops and provides access to subdatabases on the issue national minorities in the Slovak Republic, which present the knowledge production of national minorities and provide a picture of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic. In 2015, the Slovak National Library provided its premises in the Literary Museum for the production of a theatre performance organised by the Czech Union in Slovakia with support from the Culture of National Minorities programme of the Office of the Government. This was a single-actor's

performance *Osamělé večery Dory N* [Lonely Nights of Dora N] conveying the memories of the daughter of famous Czech novelist Božena Němcová.

In the 2011-2014 period, the **State Scientific Library in Prešov** implemented the national project **Documentary and Information Centre of Roma Culture** with the aim of creating a *Roma culture documentation and information centre* (hereinafter the 'RCDIC') as a new specialised national department and an organisational unit of the library. The project received support from the European Regional Development Fund. The project has been completed both factually (October 2014) and in terms of financing (June 2015) and is currently at the sustainability stage, during which the library will carry out activities planned for a period of at least five years. The mission of the unit is to **map, identify and document the living manifestations of Roma culture**, i.e. to create new digital cultural objects (the so-called e-born digital objects), namely in the following areas: *literature and oral history, musical heritage of the Roma and Roma and crafts*. This includes, in particular, the documentation of all expressions that can be understood as Roma culture and Roma cultural heritage in Slovakia. The RCDIC's effort is to strengthen the identity of the Roma national minority and change the perception of this minority, not only among members of the majority, but also among the Roma themselves, by presenting Roma as people who followed their goal and achieved a significant status. These are activities covered especially by the 'documentary' part of the unit's name.

The unit's role is to subsequently make available the final digital content through its own presentation website at www.portalsvk.sk or www.portalsvk.eu, which have been created for this purpose. It is expected that in the near future the State Scientific Library will join the memory and repository institutions on the **Slovakiana** web portal with its presentations of digital cultural objects. The centre's activities include the operation of a Roma studies room, in which the library also builds holdings from other areas related to the life of the Roma minority.

The library recorded most of its materials during the pilot operation of the RCDIC and these are being continuously processed. In 2015, it **processed 88 digital cultural objects, in particular** video files related to music, but also memory monologues and some objects from the area of crafts; it recorded 6 new manifestations of Roma culture: the Gypsy Jazz Festival, Duo Farsa, the fairy tale 'Tajomný svet a chlpačikovia' [Mysterious World and Hairy Creatures], Roma Talent Svidník, Jozef Fečo: painting a picture, and the fairy tale 'Čertovský čapáš' [Devilish chapash]; it **organised four events** supported by the MC SR as part of the priority project **Live Books** (word – picture – sound), namely with film director and producer Jozef Banyák, composer and music producer Eugen Vizváry, Ľudovít Petik and Lucia Segľová, Roma journalist Jarmila Vaňová and teacher and translator Stanislav Cina; as part of the above priority project, it provided for the creation of **13 paintings of world-famous personalities** with Roma roots (*Charles Chaplin, Elvis Presley, Django Reinhardt, Freddie James Prinze, Michael Caine, Rita Hayworth, Tony Gatlif, Yul Brynner, Juscelino Kubitschek, Joaquin Cortes, Elena Lacková, Rosa Taiko, Esma Redžepova*). A **catalogue of paintings** with annotations on the individual personalities and technical parameters called *Paintings of World-famous Personalities* was created. The catalogue is written in Slovak, Roma and English; it **issued a trilingual songbook of 15 Roma songs** called *Kajphirel e vodi/Cestou duše/The Soul's Journey* (in the course of implementing the national project, the library acquired a number of recordings of Roma songs, but not all are linguistically correct). The published songbook serves as a model, linguistically correct, songbook of 15 traditional Roma songs in the correct form and with notation. The printed version of the songbook also contains a CD with audio recordings of the notated songs. The lyrics of the songs are provided in three languages (Roma, Slovak and English), notation is provided only for the Roma

version. The official version of the Roma anthem recorded by the Moldovan Youth Orchestra is provided as a bonus. The publication was released in print (100 units) and as an electronic book in pdf, epub and mobi.

The **State Scientific Library in Banská Bystrica** organised three cultural and educational activities for 116 persons: **Generálove deti** [The General's children] – discussion with Nelli Veselá, a Russian living in Slovakia, who survived the horrors of life in a concentration camp – organised on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and liberation of people from concentration camps (36 attendants). The event was organised in cooperation with the civic association Rossija; **Сказпро Федота Стрельца** – the performance of a theatre play by the student theatre У Лукоморья under the direction of Prof. Larisa A. Sugay, DrSc. The event was organised in cooperation with the Department of Slavic Languages of the Faculty of Arts at Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica (60 attendants); **V slnečných lúčoch rodného jazyka** [In the Sun Rays of the Mother Tongue] – a music and literature evening dedicated to Russian female expatriate poetry and music organised as part of a project of the civic association Rossija. Writers and poets Nina Gade (Denmark), Olga Svanberg (Finland) and musician Inga Strom (Denmark) performed in the programme (20 attendants). The event was organised in cooperation with the civic association Rossija.

Since 1994, a **unique specialised database named ROMANO, the first of its kind in Slovakia, has been available** in the State Scientific Library in Košice; it is accessible on-line on a website, which also provides links to other institutions dedicated to Roma communities. It captures information from all scientific disciplines, legislative documents and organisational, socio-political and cultural activities of this community, including those related to prevention of discrimination and racism. The database is available at <https://sclib.svkk.sk>. The database is based, above all, on records from periodical press, both newspapers and magazines, as well as studies from conference proceedings. The majority of the documents is owned by the library. In terms of language, the information sources used are mostly in Slovak, Roma and Czech, but also in English, French, Hungarian and German. Since 2002, the records have been part of the Slovak national article bibliography. The database currently contains over 6 500 records and this number grows by around 500 records annually. The ROMANO database is used by a variety of institutions and individuals.

3.2 Facilitating the activities of professional national minority theatres and artistic ensembles

Promotion of traditional folk culture

Within the meaning of Government Resolution No 666 of 8 August 2007 concerning the 'Concept of Preservation of Traditional Folk Culture', the MC SR set up the Traditional Folk Culture Coordination Centre (today the Traditional Folk Culture Centre at the Slovak Folk Art Collective), whose mission is to protect and preserve the wealth of traditional folk culture in Slovakia, including intangible cultural heritage of national minorities living in Slovakia. In 2012, the organisation prepared a unique electronic encyclopaedia project entitled Traditional Folk Culture in Slovakia in Words and Pictures, which is available at www.ludovakultura.sk. This is a unique information resource, which is easily accessible for both educational and didactic purposes in the relevant area. With the aim of promoting the elements of intangible cultural heritage, the Representative List of Elements of Slovakia's Intangible Cultural Heritage was created, which is open to suggestions and nominations of exceptional elements of intangible cultural heritage of national minorities living in Slovakia. In 2014, the MC SR submitted a new 'Concept of Preservation of Traditional Folk Culture until 2020' at a Government session. This document also places emphasis on the protection of

intangible cultural heritage of persons belonging to national minorities in Slovakia and was approved through Government Resolution No 12 of 7 January 2015.

IfjúSzivek Dance Theatre⁷

The IfjúSzivek Dance Theatre (hereinafter the 'ISDT') is a partly State-funded organisation under the administration of the Office of the Government. It sources its funding from State budget contributions and its own revenues. As a professional dance ensemble, the ISDT is engaged in the fields of art, education, organisation and documentation in the area of traditional culture.⁸

The ISDT celebrated a double jubilee in 2015 – the 60th anniversary of foundation and 15th anniversary of establishment of the dance theatre. Besides the fact that this was the theatre's anniversary year, a special anniversary season started in September, which increased the dance theatre's attendance. The season included an anniversary gala programme in the Mestské divadlo P. O. Hviezdoslava theatre in Bratislava, which included performances by more than seven generations and more than 160 current and former dancers and singers from each period of the ISDT's sixty years' history. One of the objectives of the project was to ensure that the ISDT's home in Bratislava diversifies the spectrum of cultural events in the capital city and provide a more varied offering to culture and theatre lovers in Bratislava. The dance theatre offers folk art, theatre and professional dance for all audiences in the heart of the capital city.

In 2015, the dance theatre continued to tour both domestic and foreign venues with much success with a repertoire consisting of four shows. The ensemble danced in Italy, Romania, Hungary and, during the summer, performed in various corners of Slovakia. The popular shows from recent years - *Tance z Bratislavy* [Dances from Bratislava], *Kukučie vajíčko* [The Cuckoo's Egg] and *Vyvlastenie* [Expropriation] remained in the repertoire due to demand from promoters and, in the summer, the dance theatre introduced a new show called *Listy* [Letters]. In 2015, the ensemble performed 63 solo shows, of which 32 were in Slovakia and 19 were abroad. ISDT performed to audiences totalling in excess of 20 500 in 2015.

The Pozsony Dance Ensemble is the ISDT's youth ensemble, whose members comprise students of the ethnography class at Bratislava's Hungarian Gymnasium and Primary School and talented young dancers from the Bratislava area.

Along with rehearsals and performances of its own repertoire, the ensemble aims to bring up professional dancers for the ISDT's dance section. The ensemble works under the direction of Klaudia Gálik and Gábor Gálik who are ISDT's dancers. The Pozsony Dance Ensemble performed four times in 2015. They danced in Sládkovičovo, Komárno and Košúty and were part of the ISDT's anniversary gala programme.

The ISDT's theatre at Mostová 8 in Bratislava hosted several cultural events in 2015. Seven guest performances were given by theatres, dance ensembles, music bands and solo artists.

The ISDT's artistic personnel also engaged in teaching and artistic activities outside the ISDT. Members of the dance ensemble regularly teach folk dance through workshops,

⁷See: <http://www.ifjuszivek.sk/sk>

⁸For more information about the mission and activities of the theatre, please see the 2014 Report of the Plenipotentiary for National Minorities.

dance lessons, etc. In 2015, they gave 325 dance workshops and directed 20 new choreographies, which were presented to the broader public on 67 occasions.

Alexander Duchnovič Theatre in Prešov⁹

The Alexander Duchnovič Theatre is a professional, cultural and artistic institution in the field of theatre activities, which falls under the administration of the Prešov self-governing region.

The role of the theatre is to cultivate and disseminate cultural activities for persons belonging to the Ruthenian and Ukrainian national minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

In 2015, the Alexander Duchnovič Theatre rehearsed four theatre productions, three of which were in Ruthenian and one in Ukrainian. It gave approximately 105 performances in that year on stages both at home and abroad, most of which were targeted at the Ukrainian and Ruthenian national minorities. The events and performances of the Alexander Duchnovič Theatre were attended by 11 616 people.

Dukla Artistic Folk Ensemble¹⁰

The Poddukelský ľudový umelecký súbor - Dukla Artistic Folk Ensemble, is a partly publicly-funded organisation under the administration of the Prešov self-governing region. As a professional artistic ensemble, it engages in public and community activities.

This folk art ensemble's main activity are vocal and dance productions, creation and presentation of folklore programmes comprising vocal, dance and music productions on stages at home and abroad, with a particular focus on the development of the cultural life of Ruthenians and Ukrainians living in the Slovak Republic.

In the course of 2015, the Dukla Artistic Folk Ensemble gave approximately 86 performances on stages both at home and abroad, most of which were targeted at the Ruthenian or Ukrainian national minorities. The events and performances of the Dukla Artistic Folk Ensemble were seen by 53 700 visitors.

Jókai Theatre in Komárno¹¹

The Jókai Theatre in Komárno (hereinafter the 'JTK') is a professional drama theatre performing in Hungarian, which has had a permanent venue in Komárno since 1952. Its key mission is to disseminate Hungarian theatre culture in areas inhabited by Hungarian-speaking citizens living in Slovakia, therefore, it also does touring productions – around 30 % of its premières are performed on tours in Slovakia and Hungary. In 2015, the theatre had five premières of new productions of various theatrical genres and performed 13 plays from its own repertoire. The total number of shows performed by the theatre in that year was 161, 41 of which were performed in Hungary. Guest theatre companies gave 17 performances in the JTK's venue. Important part of the theatre's work is cross-border cooperation with the Monostori Erőd summer theatre, Debrecen's Csokonai Színház theatre, the Hungarian National Theatre in Budapest, Budapest's József Attila Színház theatre and Soproni Petöfi

⁹See: <http://www.divadload.sk/>

¹⁰See: <http://www.puls-slovakia.sk/>

¹¹See: <http://www.jokai.sk/>

Színház theatre, as well as the Slovak National Theatre in Bratislava, the Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin and the Thalia Theatre in Košice.

The JTK has a diverse audience. It comprises children of preschool age, primary and secondary school pupils, higher education students, adults and seniors, as well as an audience from Hungary.

JTK's audiences totalled 58 644 in 2015, structured as follows:

- performances of the theatre's own productions: 161 performances, 54 890 spectators;
- performances by guest theatres: 17 performances, 3 754 spectators;
- film screenings in the Kotva cinema club: 20 screenings, 577 spectators.

Romathan theatre in Košice¹²

Romathan Theatre in Košice is a budget-funded organisation under the administration of the Košice self-governing region and it continued to undertake its cultural, artistic, social and educational roles.

Children and youth remained Romathan Theatre's main focus in 2015. The theatre employs specific means to make artistic and educational impact on Roma youth and children, thus preparing an experienced and well-oriented adult audience for the future, which can be demonstrated by the frequency of shows and number of titles dedicated to this prospective audience group.

In 2015, Romathan Theatre premiered three productions on its stage and gave a total of 123 performances, of which 3 were abroad. Romathan Theatre's performances were attended by 15 323 spectators.

Thália Theatre in Košice¹³

The Thália Theatre in Košice is a partly publicly-funded organisation under the administration of the Košice self-governing region focusing especially on the development of the cultural life of the Hungarian national minority. The theatre is financing its activities from State budget contributions and its own revenues.

In 2015, Thália premiered three productions on its home stage and gave a total of 111 performances, of which 15 were abroad. Thália Theatre's productions were attended by 33 579 spectators.

3.3 Facilitating television and radio broadcasting for national minorities

Television and radio broadcasting in minority languages is ensured, in particular, through Act No 532/2010 Coll. on Radio and Television of Slovakia and on amendments to certain laws, as amended (hereinafter 'Act No 532/2010 Coll.'). Under § 5(1)(b) and (g), Act No 532/2010 Coll. lays down the obligation of Radio and Television of Slovakia to **broadcast at least four radio programming services, at least one of which shall be intended to provide programming, balanced in terms of content and regional coverage,**

¹²See: <http://www.romathan.sk/sk/>

¹³See: <http://www.thaliasinhaz.sk/new/>

in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Slovak Republic; in addition, the **broadcasting time of the programming, balanced in terms of content and regional coverage, in the languages of national minorities and ethnic groups living in the Slovak Republic shall correspond to the ethnic composition** of the population in the Slovak Republic. In order to ensure the production and broadcasting of programming for national minorities and ethnic groups, Radio and Television of Slovakia will set up separate organisational units of Slovak Radio and Slovak Television.

The language regime of television and radio broadcasting for national minorities is governed, in general, by National Council of the Slovak Republic Act No 270/1995 Coll. on the State language of the Slovak Republic, as amended (hereinafter 'Act No 270/1995 Coll.'). **In principle, television and radio broadcasting in the territory of the Slovak Republic is in the State language. Act No 270/1995 Coll., however, lays down exceptions, when broadcasting in the languages of national minorities is allowed: in the case of television broadcasting, broadcasts in a minority language must be accompanied by subtitles in the State language or immediately followed by broadcasts in the State language.** This means that Act No 270/1995 Coll. allows broadcasters to air all television programming in a minority language as long as the broadcasts are accompanied by Slovak subtitles in cases not covered by the exceptions provided in § 5(1). In the case of radio broadcasting, Act No 270/1995 Coll. lays down an exception for broadcasts for national minorities on Slovak Radio and regional or local broadcasting intended for persons belonging to national minorities, including live broadcasts from events, for which the use of the Slovak language is not required, and the whole programming service of private radio broadcasters may be aired exclusively in a minority language (without the need to provide the Slovak language version).

RTVS national minority broadcasting

The operating conditions and budget of the **National Minority Broadcasting Centre** remained unchanged from the previous year. A long-term stable situation has been maintained in television broadcasting under the given conditions, while minor, but important, changes have been achieved in radio broadcasting despite budgetary restrictions.

As a broadcaster by law, Radio and Television of Slovakia is subject to legal obligations in the area of broadcasting for persons belonging to national minorities. These obligations are defined in § 5(b) and (g) of Act No 532/2010 Coll.

The institution fulfils its legal obligations in radio broadcasting defined in Act No 532/2010 Coll. on an ongoing basis, in television broadcasting, the conditions for compliance with Act No 532/2010 Coll. are being created within the scope of the existing, substantially limited, possibilities. RTVS has long been drawing attention to the need to review the financing of broadcasting in the public interest because even though the current model makes it possible to maintain the existing model of operation, it does not allow for further effective development.

For many years, the RTVS management have been working to find room for improvement in production and broadcasting, thanks to which a clear improvement in the quality of programming and upgrade of technology and content have been achieved, together with a very decent improvement in radio broadcasting.

The staffing of the National Minority Broadcasting Centre's editorial offices is satisfactory and these units dominate the relevant Slovak media market. Radio Patria provides

the most influential media content for minorities, its total listenership is double that of any other national minority media.

In the course of 2015, the National Minority Broadcasting Centre produced and broadcast programming within the limits of Act No 532/2010 Coll. and none of the regulators detected any breaches of the law.

RTVS radio broadcasting

In radio broadcasting for national minorities, 2015 was a year of stabilisation and improvement of programming, in particular for the smaller national minorities. The preceding years brought stabilisation and improvement of programming in Hungarian – it is aired 12 hours a day on the Radio Patria programming service in the form of the so-called full-format radio. This programming service competes for listeners in prime time with emphasis on the informational and educational function of public broadcasting. The broadcasting time of art and literature/drama formats has slightly decreased, because of the fact that the issue of financing of the public service has not been addressed and because of the limits given by the resources available for production. Nevertheless, art and literature/drama programming continues to be broadcast and the radio produces three or four own programmes annually. Radio Patria's Hungarian broadcasting team works closely with cultural institutions and, in 2015, it provided airtime to the Central Choir of Hungarian Teachers producing two public recordings of the choir; it also produced public recordings of classical music on the occasion of Béla Bartók's anniversary and recorded a concert of major Occitan artist Miquel Montanar, who specialises in ethnic music.

A qualitative change has occurred in Ruthenian and Ukrainian broadcasting by strengthening the informational function of public broadcasting. The daytime stream format in Ruthenian and Ukrainian became an informational programme providing current information covering a broader range of topics. At the end of the year, similar steps started to be taken to improve the quality of Roma language programming.

The national minority broadcasting office in Košice increased the share of Czech programming, the production of which was stabilised in 2015; a decent professional standard has been achieved as regards the format of German and Polish broadcasting.

At the end of 2015, the RTVS National Minority Broadcasting Centre created financial and organisational conditions for broadcasting in Serbian, Croatian and Bulgarian so that regular broadcasts in these languages can commence in 2016. RTVS has also allocated the relevant frequency for these programs on Radio Patria's FM frequency in Bratislava.

The weekly radio broadcasting time is 100.5 hours and the broadcasts are available on MW and FM frequencies in Hungarian and on Radio Regina's FM frequencies in the other languages. Analogue broadcasting is available, but significantly limited in the case of Hungarian broadcasting on Žitný ostrov. Digital broadcasting is available throughout the territory of the Slovak Republic.

RTVS television broadcasting

Television broadcasting is typically at a decent professional standard and is provided in magazine-type informational formats. Television broadcasts are aired in ten languages and their share in broadcast time is close to the proportion prescribed in § 5(g) of Act No 532/2010 Coll. Further progress, including the extension of total broadcasting time for national minorities so that it complies with the requirements under § 5(g), will not be possible unless the financing of the public service is revised.

Despite limited resources, both the form and content of television broadcasting continued to be modernised. The Hungarian formats - the Správy-Hírek news programme, Sme doma [We are at home] and Tvárou v tvár [Face to Face] - produced in the RTVS' most state-of-the-art studio meet the 21st century standards visually and are attractive to viewers in terms of content. The Roma magazine has also been modernised and upgraded, to commence in 2016, have been prepared for other programming, too.

RTVS broadcasts standard quality and, in some cases, exceptional quality national minority programming. The broadcasting time is 3 hours and 15 minutes weekly in regular formats, complemented by extraordinary broadcasts, which meant approx. additional two hours of irregular programming in 2015, aired outside the fixed programming structure.

3.4 Support and development of the museums of national minorities

The **Slovak National Museum** (hereinafter the 'SNM') – an organisation under the administration of the MC SR, is the most significant national collection, documentation, science and research, methodology and presentation museum institution. The SNM provides for comprehensive museum documentation of the development of Slovakia's society and culture, including the culture of national minorities and ethnic groups that lived and live in the Slovak Republic. These activities are carried out on the basis of surveys and scientific research, in accordance with the SNM's focus and specialisation as defined in Act No 206/2009 Coll. on museums and galleries, protection of cultural objects and on amendment to Slovak National Council Act No 372/1990 Coll. on offences, as amended, as amended by Act No 38/2014 Coll. (hereinafter 'Act No 206/2009 Coll.')

and Act No 523/2004 Coll. on budgetary rules of public administration and on amendments to certain laws, as well as in the SNM's deed of foundation.

The development of material and spiritual culture of national minorities is documented by the following organisational units of the SNM:

- Museum of Jewish Culture, Bratislava,
- Museum of Carpathian German Culture, Bratislava,
- Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia, Bratislava,
- Museum of Ukrainian Culture, Svidník,
- Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia, Martin,
- Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia, Martin,
- Museum of Ruthenian Culture, Prešov,
- Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia, Bratislava.

Table 1: Overview of financing of the SNM's organisational units – 8 specialised, so-called national minority museums, in 2013-2015 (in euros)¹⁴

Museum	2013	2014	2015
Museum of Carpathian German Culture	105 033	109 943	104 420
Museum of Jewish Culture	450 380	510 783	510 209
Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia	350 593	287 974	259 120

¹⁴ Note: the amounts represent total funds allocated from the State budget – the Culture chapter, as of 31 December of the given year, for operating expenses, capital expenditure and priority projects.

Museum of Ukrainian Culture	302 132	343 628	453 805
Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia	61 591	66 044	62 448
Museum of Roma Culture	32 516	40 373	33 754
Museum of Czech Culture	34 001	37 241	34 010
Museum of Ruthenian Culture	100 902	110 204	110 863
Total	1 437 148	1 506 190	1 568 629

SNM - Museum of Jewish Culture

The Museum of Jewish Culture in Bratislava (hereinafter the ‘MJC’) is a specialised scientific-research, documentation and methodological museum unit focusing specifically on the exploration of the history and development of material and spiritual culture of Jews in Slovakia.¹⁵

It organised five displays in 2015. Brief overview of the displays: *Holocaust Museum in Sereď* – created in the premises of the former labour and concentration camp in Sereď, this is an authentic place linked to the tragic period of the solution to the Jewish question in Slovakia during World War II, *Museum of Jewish Culture (Zsigray Curia)* – a permanent display acquainting visitors with the history and culture of Jews living in the territory of Slovakia since as far back as the Great Moravian Empire; *Display of Jewish Artefacts from the Collection of Eugen Barkány* – Prešov, *Fates of Slovak Jews* – a display housed in the Nitra Synagogue, which is being moved to the newly-built Holocaust Museum in Sereď, *Display of Jewish Artefacts* – Spišské Podhradie Synagogue.

Exhibition activities: 14 exhibitions: *Jewish literature 2. Germany. Israel. USA (the SNM library – MJC)*; *Igi Brezo – Nezabudni* [Don’t Forget] (*MJC – Bratislava*); *Igi Brezo – Smrť holubíc* [Death of Doves] (*Poprad*), *Pesach Festival - SNM’s Spring Festivities* – Červený Kameň Castle; *Samuel (Shmila) Ahishahar – Tu som postavil svoj dom* [Here I built my house] (*MJC – Bratislava*), *The Museum of Jewish Culture Presents itself* (*Maribor – Slovenia*), *Rodinný tábor* [Family Camp] (*MJC – Bratislava*), *Igi Brezo – Príroda v zrkadle duše* [Nature in the Mirror of the Soul] (*Israel - Jerusalem*), *Sofína voľba po česky (a slovensky)* [Sophia’s Choice in Czech (and Slovak)] – (*MJC – Bratislava*) – the exhibition includes screening of the film ‘*Na sever*’ [To the North], which had its worldwide première in Slovakia. The exhibition is accompanied by an educational programme; *Arik Brauer – Farebné sny* [Colourful dreams] – the exhibition consists of Arik Brauer’s paintings and publications loaned from a private collection for presentation by the Museum of Jewish Culture; *Jews in Slovakia. 3. Bratislava (SNM library – MJC)*, *Jews in Slovakia. 4. Bratislava (SNM library – MJC)*, *Jews in Slovakia. 5. Trnava and its surroundings. Záhorie. Myjava (SNM library – MJC)*.

Attendance: number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 8 943 (free admission 3 453).

Cultural and educational activities: number of events: 52/number of visitors: 2 760.

¹⁵See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-zidovskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>

Science and research activities: number of projects: 6. Brief overview of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): *Židovskí kníhtlačiari v Nitre* [Jewish Book Printers in Nitra] (M. Naster – a study published in specialised press), *Poznačená generácia* [Affected Generation] (M. Korčok, M. Vaněk); *Encyklopédia Spravodliví medzi národmi* [Righteous Among the Nations Encyclopaedia] (P. Mešťan, E. Poláková, S. Šikulová – monograph), *Acta Judaica Slovaca* (P. Mešťan, S. Šikulová – collection of works), *Antisemitizmus v politickom vývoji* [Anti-Semitism in Political Development] (P. Mešťan – monograph), *Sered'ské svedectvá* [Testimonies from Sered'] (M. Korčok).

Publishing activities: number of titles: 4 (author, title): P. Mešťan/E. Poláková – *Encyklopédie ŽNO – Register miest a obcí I. – IV. zväzok* [Encyclopaedias of Jewish Religious Communities – Register of Towns and Villages volumes I-IV] – monograph; P. Mešťan/M. Ferko – *Nezlomení zlomení* [The Unbroken Broken] – textbook, P. Mešťan/E. Poláková – *Acta Judaica Slovaca 21* – collection of works, P. Mešťan/J. Sulaček: *Právnicki práva zbavení II.* [Lawyers Deprived of Rights] – monograph.

Acquisition activities: number of items: 378 (history – 378), number of incremental issues: 184.

SNM - Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia

The SNM – Museum of Hungarian Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the ‘MHCS’) is a specialised scientific-research, documentation and methodological museum unit specialising in the exploration of the history and development of material and spiritual culture of Hungarians in Slovakia. The museum has the following branches: Memorial House of Kálmán Mikszáth in Sklabiná (Sklabiná, 188) and Imre Madách Manor House in Dolná Strehová.¹⁶

In 2015, the museum organised three displays. Brief overview of the displays: *Tradicie a hodnoty. Maďari na Slovensku* [Traditions and Values. Hungarians in Slovakia] – the display presents material and spiritual monuments of the Hungarian minority in Slovakia, *Tu prežil... Pamätná výstava Kálmána Mikszátha* [Here lived... Exhibition commemorating Kálmán Mikszáth] – the display presents the life and literary work of famous Hungarian writer Kálmán Mikszáth and life in Sklabiná in the 19th century; *Kde som to vlastne, kde sú moje sny?* [Where Am I and Where Are My Dreams?] (Dolná Strehová) – a commemorative display presenting life in the castle in the 19th century and the settings where a literary work of worldwide relevance was created.

Exhibition activities: 15 exhibitions (of which 7 were reprises). Brief overview of the exhibitions: *Kornél Divald; 600 dní – 600 piesní* [600 days – 600 songs], *MLčanie – Život* [Silence – Life], *Slovom a činom* [In Words and Deeds], *Exhibition of Children's Drawings*, *Očití svedkovia* [Eyewitnesses], *Mojim národom* [To my Peoples] (exhibition created using documented memorabilia, photographs, correspondence cards and other documents, as well as items and documents from the collections of partner institutions. It tracks the events of World War I and presents the fates of combatants from our region in various places of Europe), *Personalities of Literature Working in the District of Veľký Krtíš, Eva Mayer, FOTOFO.*

¹⁶See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-madarov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>

Attendance: number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 15 888 (free admission 8 732).

Cultural and educational activities: number of events: 22/number of visitors: 1 774 (also 16 lectures/960 visitors).

Science and research activities: number of projects: 6. Brief description of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): *Rómer Flóris and Bratislava* (A. Papp – exhibition script), *History of Imre Madách's Manor House* (G. Jarábik, K. Damjanovova, A. Moravčíková – a study published in specialised press); *Documentation of World War I Monuments in the Territory of Slovakia* (J. Hushegyi, S. Siposová, A. Feke – article published in specialised press), *World War I in Fine Arts* (K. Kubičková – exhibition script), *The Cult of Personalities of Hungarian Literature in Slovakia, phase II – Fábry* (S. Siposová – lecture); *Preparation of a New Permanent Display in the Museum's Main Building* (G. Jarábik, A. Feke, J. Hushegyi, S. Siposová – exhibition script).

Publishing activities: number of titles: 4 (responsible person/author, title): A. Papp – *Slovom a činom* [In Words and Deeds] – bulletin; S. Siposová – *Acta Museologica Hungarica* – collection of works; G. Jarábik – *Cesta anjela* [Journey of an Angel] – bibliography; S. Siposová – *Očití svedkovia 1914 – 1918: I. svetová vojna vo výtvarnom umení* [Eyewitnesses 1914 – 1918: World War I in Fine Arts] – exhibition catalogue.

Acquisition activities: number of items: 28 (history – 28), number of incremental issues: 21.

SNM – Museum of Carpathian German Culture

The Museum of Carpathian German Culture (hereinafter the 'MCGC') focuses on collecting, protecting, processing and presenting of artefacts documenting the material and spiritual culture of Carpathian Germans. The collections cover all areas of the life of Carpathian Germans: parts of clothing, textiles, home and trade crafts, industrial products, works of art, sacral objects and newspapers. The MCGC has its branches in Nitrianske Pravno and Handlová in the Meeting Houses of the Carpathian German Association, which hold permanent exhibitions dedicated to the history and culture of the *Hauerland*. The MCGC includes a documentation and information centre specialising in the topic of the history and culture of Carpathian Germans. It is centred around a library comprising periodic press and literature published in Slovakia and abroad.¹⁷

The MCGC is the most comprehensively equipped institution in Slovakia. Its library is used by students and professionals from both Slovakia and abroad. The MCGC publishes its own edition *Acta Carpatho-Germanica*.

Presentation activities: in 2015, four displays were organised. Brief overview of the displays: *History and Culture of Carpathian Germans* – a display presenting the nearly 900-year history and culture of Germans living in Slovakia; *History and Culture of Hauerland* – a display in Nitrianske Pravno's House of the Carpathian German Association, which provides an opportunity to learn about the traditions and life of Carpathian Germans in central Slovakia (the so-called *Hauerland*), with emphasis on Nitrianske Pravno and its surroundings; *History and Culture of Handlová* – a display in the House of the Carpathian German Association in Handlová, which offers the opportunity to learn about the history of settlement, tradition of mining and crafts, as well as a number of artefacts presenting the traditional material, spiritual

¹⁷See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-karpatskych-nemcov-uvodna-stranka>

and art culture of the German minority in Handlová; *Carpathian Germans* – a display presenting the dwellings of Germans in the Kremnica area at the end of the 19th and in early 20th century.

Exhibition activities: 5 exhibitions. Brief overview of the exhibitions: *Transformations of Zuckermandel* – an exhibition about the development and transformations of the area below the Bratislava Castle; *20 years of the Museum of Carpathian Germans* – exhibition on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of foundation of the museum; *Festival of Culture and Mutuality of Carpathian Germans – 20 years* – a retrospective exhibition about the 20 years of the Festival of Carpathian Germans in Kežmarok; *Carpathian German Folk Costumes – Kežmarok*; *Spišská Nová Ves* – an exhibition presenting the folk costumes of Carpathian Germans from all areas of German settlement throughout Slovakia.

Attendance: number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 5 237 (free admission 5 237).

Cultural and educational activities: 19 events/number of visitors 600 (including 12 lectures/216 visitors).

Science and research activities: number of projects: 4. Brief description of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): *Carpathian Germans in the History and Culture of Slovakia* (O. Pöss), *Political Life of Carpathian Germans* (M. Schvarc – a study published in specialised press), *Ethnography of Carpathian Germans* (R. Fil'o), *'Huncokári' in the Small Carpathians* (O. Pöss, R. Fil'o – script of the display).

Publishing activities: number of titles: 2 (responsible person/author, title, brief description): O. Pöss – *Ernst Tomasch – Mantakisch-deutsch-slowakisches Wörterbuch/Mantácko-nemecko-slovenský slovník* [Mantakisch-German-Slovak Dictionary] – a dictionary (covering the vocabulary of the dialect in the Medzev area and containing expressions generally used in spoken language, foreign words, including German, which are still used unchanged, but also those no longer familiar to today's generation as a result of the changes in economic circumstances, technical progress and the way of life): O. Pöss – *Acta Carpatho-Germanica., Volume XXI* – collection of works.

Acquisition activities: number of items: 48 (history – 43, ethnography – 5), number of incremental issues: 17.

SNM - Museum of Ruthenian Culture in Prešov

The SNM's Museum of Ruthenian Culture (hereinafter the 'MRuC') in Prešov is a unique museum of national stature, the youngest within the SNM's structure. It is a documentary, scientific-research and methodological unit specialising in the history and culture of Ruthenians living in Slovakia. It focuses on the acquisition, protection, scientific and technical processing of, and provision of public access to, museum collections showcasing the development of the material and spiritual culture of the Ruthenians in the Slovak Republic and all over the world.¹⁸

Exhibition activities: 7 exhibitions. Brief overview of the exhibitions: *History of Ruthenians in Slovakia* – a permanent exhibition presenting everyday life of Ruthenians in the historical context of modern history, the culture of apparel, food traditions, folk handicrafts, sacral architecture, as well as historical and recent publications about Ruthenians; *Paintings of*

¹⁸See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-rusinskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>

Ruthenian Painters – an exhibition presenting attractive works of art loaned from the private collection of Mr Peter Mikula of Belovež; *Easter Customs and Traditions of Ruthenians in Slovakia* – an exhibition dedicated to Ruthenian traditions and customs during Easter – Pascha; *About Parachuting in Prešov* – exhibition showcasing the history, personalities and achievements of parachuting in Prešov; *Wooden Temples* – a unique series of models demonstrating the art and skills of Ladislav Cidyla who built faithful 1:50 copies of real wooden sacral structures (churches) located in the regions of north-eastern Slovakia; *Ruthenian Literature – a presentation of the most recent books in the area of Carpathio-Ruthenian studies* – the exhibition presented works by Ruthenian authors not only from Slovakia, but also authors from abroad raising awareness of the Ruthenian ethnicity; *Christmas Traditions in Ruthenian Homes* – the purpose of the exhibition is to raise awareness of certain Christmas customs and traditions from various localities of north-eastern Slovakia.

Attendance: number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 964 (free admission 660).

Cultural and educational activities: number of events: 9/number of visitors: 200.

Science and research activities: number of projects: 5. Brief overview of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): *History of Ruthenians in Slovakia, 2014-2016, PP no 2* (O. Glosíková – script of the display), *Ethnicity of Folk Culture in North-Eastern Slovakia 2014-2018* (O. Glosíková, M. Sopoliga), *Memorials and Commemorative Plaques of Leading Ruthenian ‘Awakeners’ from Slovakia; PP no 3 for 2015-2017* (O. Glosíková, staff of the SNM-MRuC – exhibition script), *Participation of Ruthenians in World War II and the Slovak National Uprising* (O. Glosíková, staff of the SNM-MRuC), *Documentation of the Culture of Ruthenians in Slovakia and Abroad in the Areas of Singing, Music, Dance, Photography and Film* (O. Glosíková, I. Čižmár – exhibition script).

Acquisition activities: number of items: 90 (ethnography – 88, history of art – 1, history of technology – 1), number of incremental issues: 88.

SNM - Museum of Ukrainian Culture in Svidník

The key mission of the Museum of Ukrainian Culture (hereinafter the ‘MUC’) is to document and present the basic stages of the cultural, historical, political and social development of Ukrainians in Slovakia, from the earliest times to the present day. The MUC offers three permanent displays to its visitors: a culture and history display (since 1974), an open-air national history display (since 1983), and an art and history display - the Dezider Milly Gallery (since 1986).¹⁹

In 2015, the museum organised three displays. Brief overview of the displays: *Culture and History Display* – provides brief characteristics of the natural and climatic conditions in the region, together with an overview of the history of settlement, economy, government, and social, national and cultural development of the ethnicity from the earliest times to the present day. Covering the period from the Neolithic age to the eighties of the 20th century, it presents the region of north-eastern Slovakia with a focus on the development of inter-ethnic relations. Its thematic structure is as follows: Introduction; Man and Nature; In the Footsteps of the Ancestors; Traditional Folk Culture; Czechoslovak Period (since 1918); *Open-air National History Display* – in addition to the main types of dwellings, the display showcases all kinds of traditional farm buildings: barns, sties, granaries, hay barns, cellars, wells and other smaller structures. Traditional farming tools (various types of wagons, ploughs, gates, grain chests,

¹⁹See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-ukrajinskej-kultury-uvodna-stranka>

grain baskets and a variety of other tools) have been installed in these structures; *Art and History Display (D. Milly Gallery)* – this display showcases the development of folk and professional art of Ruthenians and Ukrainians in Slovakia from the 16th century to the present day.

Exhibition activities: 5 exhibitions. Brief description of the exhibitions: *World War I – Fights in the Carpathians, 1914-1915* – a photographic exhibition documenting the events of World War I in Eastern Slovakia, *Easter Eggs 2015 – 16th edition of the exhibition with a competition* in decorating Easter eggs; *Highlights of the Work of Anna Boršovská-Nemcová* – presentation of textile works by the artist on the occasion of her birthday anniversary, *Z krosna do Krosna [From a Loom to Krosno]* – a reprise of the 8th International Artistic Linen Cloth Biennial, *War for Peace* – an exhibition of documentary photography about the war conflict in eastern Ukraine. **Attendance:** number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 15 617 (free admission 10 019).

Cultural and educational activities: number of events: 50/number of visitors: 3 760 (these were various cultural and social activities – conferences, art competitions and showcases, discussions, round tables, liturgical events, theatre performances, book and exhibition launches, multi-genre events, etc.).

Science and research activities: number of projects: 8. Brief overview of science and research projects (title, investigators, outcome): *Ethnicity of Folk Culture in North-Eastern Slovakia – Phase I, 2015, evaluation of museum collections and book holdings* (M. Sopoliga et al.); *Open-air Museums in Slovakia: History and Current State* (M. Sopoliga – a study in specialised press); *Folk Architecture of Ukrainians in Slovakia* (M. Sopoliga – monograph); *Traditional Methods of Prophylaxis in Holiday- and Work-related Family Customs* (J. Varchol – a study in specialised press); *The Ethnographic Theme in the Naïve Works of Michal Sirík* (J. Varchol, N. Varcholová – a study in specialised press); *Traditional Treatment of Child Diseases* (N. Varcholová – a study in specialised press); *Fine Art of Ukrainians in Slovakia after 1945/Textile Works of Akad. Mal. Anna Boršovská-Nemcová, 1982-2014* (L. Puškár – exhibition script); *Bread in the Customs and Ceremonies of Ruthenians and Ukrainians in Slovakia* (J. Varchol – a study in specialised press). **Publishing activities** - number of titles: 1 (author, title, brief description): M. Sopoliga – *Anna Boršovská-Nemcová* – bulletin **Acquisition activities:** number of items: 90 (history – 57, ethnography – 31, art history – 2), number of incremental issues: 39.

SNM – Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia

The Museum of Roma Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the ‘MRCS’) is a specialised unit of the SNM in Martin. The museum’s basic area of activity is the sourcing, processing and protection of collection holdings and presentation of Roma culture.²⁰

The SNM’s year-round permanent display *Romano drom/The Path of the Roma* plays an important role in terms of promoting Roma culture and language. The museum’s successful projects include two travelling panel exhibitions – *Príbeh detí vetra [Story of the Children of the Wind]* (the pilot exhibition for the museum’s permanent display) and the *Gallery of Roma Personalities (2010)*, which are regularly reprised in cooperation with a variety of cultural, educational and community institutions.

²⁰See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-romov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>

One display was organised in 2015. Brief description of the displays: *Romano Drom/The Path of the Roma* – the display presents the origins and history of Roma from the time of the Roma's exodus from India to their arrival in Europe.

Exhibition activities: 2 exhibitions. Brief overview of the exhibitions: *Truth in beauty, beauty in truth – Roma in the Work of Czech Artist Václav Fiala* (exhibition of 19 works by Czech artist Václav Fiala depicting the life of Roma in Slovakia in the 30s and 50s of the 20th century); *Memories* (an exhibition of the works of amateur Roma carver Miloš Rác was opened as part of the event Texprindžaras amen/Let's get to know each other 2015).

Attendance: number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 333.

Cultural and educational activities: number of events: 4/number of visitors: 517.

Science and research activities: number of projects: 2. Brief overview of the projects: *Historical and Ethnographic Study of Groups of Dwellings and Objects on Display in the Slovak Village Museum – a Selection of Roma Dwellings in Turiec* (I. Segřová – a study published in specialised press); *Romani Crafts and Professions Project* – in cooperation with the Fundacija Dobra Wola foundation, Krakow, Poland (A. Danekova – audio-visual documentation and an educational document).

Acquisition activities: number of items: 537, number of incremental issues: 0.

SNM - Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia

The SNM's Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the 'MCzCS') was established in 1999 in accordance with the SNM's Statute for the purpose of acquiring, preserving, processing and presenting material documentation of the culture of persons belonging to the Czech minority in Slovakia and studying the Czech phenomenon in Slovakia. It is a specialised documentation and scientific-research museum unit of national stature, which is profiling itself as an institution placing emphasis on acquisition, methodological, expert, cultural and educational activities. The MCzCS is located in its own building in Martin, where its permanent display, showrooms, office space and archive rooms are located.²¹

It organised one display in 2015. Brief overview of the displays: *Museum of Czech Culture in Slovakia* – permanent display dedicated to two significant figures, the original owners of the museum building, PhDr. Anna Horáková-Gašparíková and academic Jiří Horák.

Exhibition activities: 4 exhibitions. Brief description of the exhibitions: *S batohom cez hory* [With a Backpack through the Mountains] – an exhibition loaned from the Museum of Physical Culture in the Slovak Republic; *Číročistý romantik* [Purest Romantic]/*Jaroslav Vodrážka 1894-1984* – an exhibition dedicated to the life and work of the Czech artist working in Slovakia – a pioneer of children's books illustration in Slovakia; *Pravda v kráse/Kráska v pravde* [Truth in beauty, beauty in truth] – *Roma in the work of Václav Fiala* – exhibition presenting works by Czech artist Václav Fiala thematically linked to the Roma community, which resulted from his creative visits to Slovakia; *České stopy v Turci* [Czech Trails in Turiec] – an exhibition looking back at the contribution of Czech personalities to the economic, cultural and social development of the Turiec region and, in particular, the city of Martin as a centre of national culture and, at the same time, a centre of contacts with the Czech cultural and political representation.

²¹See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-cechov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>

Attendance: number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 537 (free admission 177).

Cultural and educational activities: number of events: 3/number of visitors: 16.

Science and research activities: number of projects: 1 (name, investigators, outcome): *Czechs in Slovakia – Analysis of the Contribution of Czechs to the Economic, Cultural and Social Development of Slovakia – Industrial Centre of North-Western Slovakia – City of Žilina and the Upper Váh Basin Region* (H. Zelinová, M. Sedláčková, T. Siekliková – a study published in specialised press).

Publishing activities: studies and articles: *Ako bolo byt' dieťaťom pred sto rokmi* [How it was to be a child a hundred years ago] (Acta Musaei Scepusiensis 2015); *Collection of Theatre Posters of the Vinohradská Richta Drama Group I. and II.* (Letters of Slovaks and Czechs who want to know more about each other); *Jaroslav Vodrážka – In the Footsteps of his Father* (NŽT); *Václav Fiala: Truth in Beauty, Beauty in Truth* (NŽT).

Acquisition activities: number of items: 64, number of incremental issues: 0.

SNM - Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia

The SNM – Museum of Croatian Culture in Slovakia (hereinafter the 'MCrCS') is a specialised museum of a national stature. The MCrCS is a documentation, scientific-research and methodological museum unit focusing on the history and culture of the Croatian minority since its arrival in Slovakia to the present day. The MCrCS's mission is the targeted acquisition, preservation, processing and provision of access to museum collections and holdings documenting the roots, history and culture of the Croats living in Slovakia or in other countries – in particular, the Burgenland Croats.²²

Three displays were organised in 2015. Brief overview of the displays: *History and Culture of Croats in Slovakia* – the display focuses on presenting the material and cultural heritage of the Croatian minority in Slovakia. It concentrates on the following areas, in particular: Croatian settlement, ethnic awareness and language, folk architecture and housing, apparel and textile culture, folk art and family customs; *4 000 Years of Settlement of Devínska Nová Ves* (formerly a separate municipality, for some time its name was Chorvátska Nová Ves); *History and Culture of Croats in Devínska Nová Ves* – a display reflecting old-day Devínska Nová Ves and mapping the life in the village in the 19th and 20th century. It is divided into several blocks: history, clothing, spiritual life and the church, recruits, and work and crafts. The greater part of the display consists of collection items of the SNM-MCrCS originating from Devínska Nová Ves. Other items have been loaned from local residents, the municipality and the church in Devínska Nová Ves.

Exhibition activities: 6 exhibitions. Brief overview of the exhibitions: *Croatian Writers* – an exhibition presenting the most famous personalities of the past and present Croatian literature, organised in cooperation with the Croatian Embassy in Slovakia; *Jarovce a Jarovčania* [Jarovce and its People] – an exhibition focused on the history and culture of the municipality of Jarovce, where a Croatian population has lived since the 16th century, *Works by Children from the ZUŠ DNV* – an exhibition various works by children attending the Primary School of Art in Devínska Nová Ves, *Directors and Actors in Classrooms* – an exhibition providing an insight into the school days of popular Slovak actors and directors, *Fotofórum 2015* – an exhibition of amateur photographers from Devínska Nová Ves, *Golden Threads of the*

²²See: <http://www.snm.sk/?muzeum-kultury-chorvatov-na-slovensku-uvodna-stranka>

Pannonian Plain – an exhibition of paintings made from straws by Croats associated in Matija Gubec's art and education club in the territory of Vojvodina, Serbia.

Attendance: number of visitors to displays and exhibitions: 910 (free admission 685).

Cultural and educational activities: 5 events/195 visitors (also 2 lectures/77 visitors).

Science and research activities: number of projects: 0.

Publishing activities: number of titles 0.

Acquisition activities: number of items: 14 (history – 6; ethnography – 8), number of incremental issues: 14.

The Slovak National Uprising (SNU) Museum organised the following events in the relevant area: Exhibitions: 70th Anniversary of the Liberation of the Auschwitz Concentration Camp – documentary exhibition prepared by the Auschwitz-Birkenau State Museum in Auschwitz. The exhibition is a memento of the crimes committed against the innocent during the war frenzy (attendance: 3 600 persons), **Fero Guldan – Exoduses** – an exhibition on the topic of forced departures and emigration in 20th century's Slovakia. It offers visitors the opportunity to reflect not only on historical events, but also the current problem of discrimination and racial intolerance in our society. The event was organised with financial support from the Office of the Government (attendance: 2350 persons). As part of the event, a debate under the title 'Emigration, Exoduses' was organised. The exhibition's theme and methodology were designed so as to help young people learn about the historical events of the 20th century in a broader, European context and contribute to the creation of a tolerant society, without elements of nationalism and intolerance (31 students), Armenian genocide on the pages of the world press – a documentary exhibition on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of the Armenian genocide in the territory of the former Ottoman Empire. 1.5 million Armenians were murdered in the 1915-1917 period (attendance: 3 700 persons); Anne Frank – History and Present Day – a travelling exhibition presented in secondary schools in Slovakia in cooperation with the Bratislava-based Milan Šimečka Foundation (2 690 students).

Educational activities: 'Kufor číslo...' [Suitcase number...] – an educational programme for 8th and 9th grade primary school pupils focused on the topic of the solution to the Jewish question in Slovakia in 1939-1945 (attended by 150 pupils); Annual school project 'Holocaust and Repressions in the Context of World War II and the Slovak National Uprising' – cooperation with J. Golian Primary School in Banská Bystrica; The SNU Museum created the script and proposed the methodology for the project, which was based on 9th grade primary school pupils accompanying their peers (423 pupils).

Cultural and social events: International Holocaust Remembrance Day – a commemorative gathering held on the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the Auschwitz-Birkenau concentration camp. The event included the launch of a documentary exhibition from the State Museum in Auschwitz and a cultural programme with performances by the MojšeBand music group and Banská Bystrica State Opera's soloist Martin Popovič (200 persons); Chaviva – international festival of Jewish music culture. As part of the festival, concerts of music groups whose songs were inspired by the Jewish culture took place in the SNU Museum. The event opened with an act of remembrance in the Garden of Haviva Reick and a short preview of the film 'Návrat do horiaceho domu' [Return to the Burning House] about the fate of Haviva Reick, murdered in Kremnička (370 persons).

The **Lúčnica Artistic Ensemble** is a major representative of, in particular, the Slovak traditional folk culture. In its programmes, it also interprets the culture of other nations, nationalities and ethnicities, thereby contributing to respect for cultural diversity and dissemination of awareness of other cultural expressions. In the context of its mission, Lúčnica delivers to thousands of spectators at home and all over the world top-class performances of folk dances, songs, vocal and vocal-instrumental compositions and traditional culture of not only Slovak, but also foreign origin.

Two events were organised in the **Slovak Technical Museum (STM)**: the exhibition **Folk Costumes of Carpathian Germans** organised by the Museum of Carpathian German Culture in Bratislava and the local group of the Carpathian German Association in Spišská Nová Ves on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of foundation of the Carpathian German Association in Slovakia (held in the Slovak Technical Museum – the display ‘History of Mining in the Spiš Region in Spišská Nová Ves’) and the event **Czech Fateful Dates** – an exhibition of photographs of leading Czech photographers who captured the turning point moments of modern Czech history (the years of 1945, 1968, 1969 and 1989 on fateful photographs). The exhibition took place as part of the Days of the Czech Culture 2015 in Košice – organisers: the Czech Association in Košice, the Czech Centre in Bratislava and the STM (the exhibition was placed in the Slovak Technical Museum in Košice).

The **Slovak Central Observatory in Hurbanovo** focuses on the popularisation of astronomy and science and research activities in this field. The observatory’s full programme is available to visitors in Hungarian. Signs in Hungarian are being gradually installed in the museum’s permanent exhibition area. The Slovak Central Observatory closely cooperates in the organisation of programmes of local civic associations of national minorities (Csemadok). Every year, approximately 30 % of school excursions to the observatory are from schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction, which means that in 2015 approx. 2 500 visitors were persons belonging to national minorities. In cooperation with Csemadok’s local organisation, the cultural event ‘Hurbanovo’s Music Summer’ was held in the premises of the observatory’s park in 2015 attended by a total of 350 attendants, most of whom were persons belonging to the Hungarian national minority. The Slovak Central Observatory is working on new programmes for its planetarium, which, in addition to the Slovak version, will also be available in English and Hungarian.

The **Folk Art Production Centre** holds various events, competitions and schools of crafts, which are open to all citizens of the Slovak Republic, regardless of nationality or ethnicity. One example of these activities is the national festival ‘Days of Masters’. Its main cultural mission is to find and support the most talented folk craftsmen and enable them to develop their skills further and promote their work regardless of nationality. Room for cooperation with organisations developing the culture of national minorities also exists in the context of publishing activities, organisation of courses of traditional crafts, as well as the School of Crafts.

3.5 Periodical and non-periodical publications of national minorities

Under § 1(2) of Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages, as amended by Act No 204/2011 Coll. amending Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages, as amended by Act No 318/2009 Coll. and amending certain laws, the languages listed below are minority languages: Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian.

As of 9 April 2016, the List of Periodical Press Titles, which is maintained by the MC SR, included:

- 44 periodical press titles published in Hungarian,
- 9 periodical press titles published in Czech,
- 3 periodical press titles published in Polish,
- 6 periodical press titles published in German,
- 3 periodical press titles published in Ruthenian,
- 2 periodical press titles published in Ukrainian,
- 1 periodical press title published in Croatian,
- 3 periodical press titles published in Russian.

Table 2: List of periodical press titles published in minority languages registered by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. Source: <http://old.culture.gov.sk/pertlac/modul/tlac>

Number of titles	Minority language	Name of the periodical
44	Hungarian	Új Szó Tücsök Irodalmi Szemle Szabad Újság Remény Jó Gazda Kalligram Új Nő VASÁRNAP Katedra Fórum Társadalomtudományi Szemle - Fórum Spoločenskovedná revue Gömörország Kürtös Kassai Figyelő Alma Mater Magyar Sion Géresi Tájékoztató ATELIER művészeti folyóirat SzőrösKő - irodalom, művészet, kritika CSERKÉSZ Hírmondó PEDAGÓGUSFÓRUM PARTITÚRA Kálvinistaszemle OPUS Gútaiújság Honti Lapok RÉGIÓ Carissimi - Esély a fogyatékos és egészségkárosodott embereknek Terra Hírújság Kabóca DUNATÁJ Szó Tár MIZUJS? ÖNKORMÁNYZATI SZEMLE KLIKK Out FULLÁNK MAGYARHÁZ PARABOLA Madiansky hlásnik/Nagymadi Hírmondó Lendület

		Vadalma Nyékvárkony Lapja Szalkai Hírlap
9	Czech	Projekty rodinných domů Dortománie Knihovnička Záhrada Knihovnička Recepty AeroHobby Modelář Modelář Extra Hobby Historie The Weathering Magazine
3	Polish	Monitor Polonijny Kurier Pieñinski Wieści prosto z gór / Zvesti priamo z hôr
6	German	Karpatenblatt Pressburger Zeitung Hurra! Slowakische Zeitschrift für Germanistik 300 Sudoku & Zahlenrätsel 100 Bilderrätsel
3	Russian	Narodny novinky Rusyn ARTOS
2	Ukrainian	New žytt'a Veselka
1	Croatian	HRVATSKA ROSA
3	Russian	V MESTE Musician SLAVICA NITRIENSIA

In addition, as of 9 April 2016, the List of Periodical Press Titles included:

- 76 periodical press titles published in Slovak and Hungarian,
- 33 periodical press titles published in Slovak and Czech,
- 5 periodical press titles published in Slovak and Roma,
- 3 periodical press titles published in Slovak and Ruthenian,
- 1 periodical press title published in Slovak and Ukrainian,
- 1 periodical press title published in Slovak and Bulgarian.

Table 3: List of periodical press titles published in minority languages registered by the Ministry of Culture of the Slovak Republic. Source: <http://old.culture.gov.sk/pertlac/modul/tlac>

Number of titles	Language	Name of the periodical
76	Slovak and Hungarian	Dunajskostredský hlásnik/Dunaszerdahelyi Hírnök Fifik Žitný ostrov - Csallóköz Castrum Novum Štúrovo a okolie, Naše noviny / Párkányés Vidéke, A Mi lapunk fresh COOL Kráľovské zvesti Slovo medzi nami Galantské noviny / Galántai Újság Šamorín a okolie / Somorjaés Vidéke Veľkoúľanský obzor / Nagyfödemesi Láthatár VYDRANY naša dedina / HODOS a mi falunk

		<p> Veľká Dobra Lehnický hlásnik INFOTORNALA Hontianske listy Želiezovský spravodajca / Zselízi Hírmondó DELTA Svätopeterské ozveny / Szentpéteri visszhang Fiľakovské zvesti / Füleki hírlap Bielčan Spravodajca / Hitközségi híradó Trnovecké noviny ARDEA, noviny obce Gbelce Vlčiansky spravodajca / Farkasdi hírmondó CHĽABANSKÝ HLÁSNIK / HELEMBAI HÍRMONDÓ LOOK MAGAZINE Život pod hradom PROPAGAND Tvrdošovský spravodaj / Tardoskeddi Hírmondó KOŠÚTSKY SPRAVODAJCA Tornaľa a okolie / Tornaľjaés Vidéke Žiriansky spravodajca / Zsérei hírmondó HURBANOVSKÝ MALÝ SVET / ÓGYALLAI KIS VILÁG Život v Sládkovičove Tešedíkovské noviny / Peredi újság Chlmecké Názory / Királyhelmecci Nézetek CITYSTAR INFO-ZÓNA BEST BRZOTÍNSKY HLÁSNIK / BERZÉTEI ÜZENET DEMANDIČAN ISTER Pribetský spravodaj / Perbetei Hírmondó MARCinfo SPRAVODAJ / HÍRNÖK Novum Naswod REČANSKÝ SPRAVODAJ / RÉTEI HÍRVIVŐ ČIERNOVODSKÝ SPRAVODAJCA KOMÁRŇANSKÉ LISTY VELKOMEDERSKÝ HLÁSNIK / NAGYMEGYERI HÍRMONDÓ Šahy a okolie Mestské noviny SENČAN Ahoj Komárno TAVÍRDA Veľkobielske novinky Senec moje mesto KORRIDOR U nás v Šarovciach / Nálunk Saroban GEMERSKÉ ZVESTI / GÖMÖRI HÍRLAP Topoľnicke noviny / Nyárasdi Újság Noviny Diakovčanov / Deákiak lapja Hlásnik obce Sap / SZAPI hírnök Kolárovský - Gútai Express MUŽLIANSKY HLÁSNIK / MUZSLAI HÍRMONDÓ GRATIS PLUS ŽUPNÉ OZVENY NOVINY VEĽKEJ PAKY / NAGYPAKAI ÚJSÁG INSERT Rival Janicky spravodaj / Jányoki hírnök </p>
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		Noviny Orechová Potôň INSPIRE Jasovský občasník DENNÍK OBCE TRSTENÁ NA/O - NÁDASDI NAPLÓ
33	Slovak and Czech	KOMUNÁLNÍ KOMUNÁLNA TECHNIKA Floristika Fragment REHABILITÁCIA Zákusky, torty, koláče Drevársky magazín Acupunctura Bohemo Slovaca FOREVER ZVÁRAČ LIEČIVÉ RASTLINY WINDSURFER aimagazine Všetko o bývaní Strojárstvo/Strojirenství FLASH ART Czech and Slovak Edition M ROSA Móda revue Spravodajca Vetservis Vitalita ROCK HARD Magická žena Al-Islám Bio&Life MAXimum Torty snov Woman Man magazine ATM Letectví a Kozmonautika Super maľované hlavolamy EVITA magazín Colorectal News Molecular Targeted Therapy Antiinfectives News
5	Slovak and Roma	ROMANO NEVO LIL - Rómsky nový list Myš(u)lienka LULUĎI Romane nevipena Rómske listy
3	Slovak and Ruthenian	Info Rusín Blahovistnik HOLOS RUSÍNA
1	Slovak and Russian	MOSTY
1	Slovak and Bulgarian	Sanarodnik (Krajan)
1	Slovak and Ukrainian	SUREC Newsletter

Periodical and non-periodical publications of national minorities are supported from the CNM programme on an annual basis (see Annex 3).

3.6 Promotion of the culture of persons belonging to national minorities through the 2015 Culture of National Minorities grant programme

One of the instruments of support for persons belonging to national minorities is the promotion of the culture of national minorities through the Culture of National Minorities

grant programme of the Office of the Government, the purpose of which is to ensure the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities, education and training on the rights of national minorities and inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between the majority community and national minorities and ethnic groups. The Culture of National Minorities grant programme falls under the competence of the Plenipotentiary. The purpose, conditions, scope and method of provision of grants under the competence of the Office of the Government are laid down in Act No 524/2010 Coll. on the provision of grants under the competence of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Grants Act’).

EUR 3 879 250 was allocated in the State budget for the promotion of cultures of national minorities in 2015. The method of redistribution of the funds among the various national minorities is based on a mathematical model for the calculation of allocations, which takes into account multiple criteria when calculating the amounts to be allocated to the individual national minorities with the aim of transparent and equitable distribution of funding. The rules for the distribution of funding were elaborated and approved by the Committee.²³

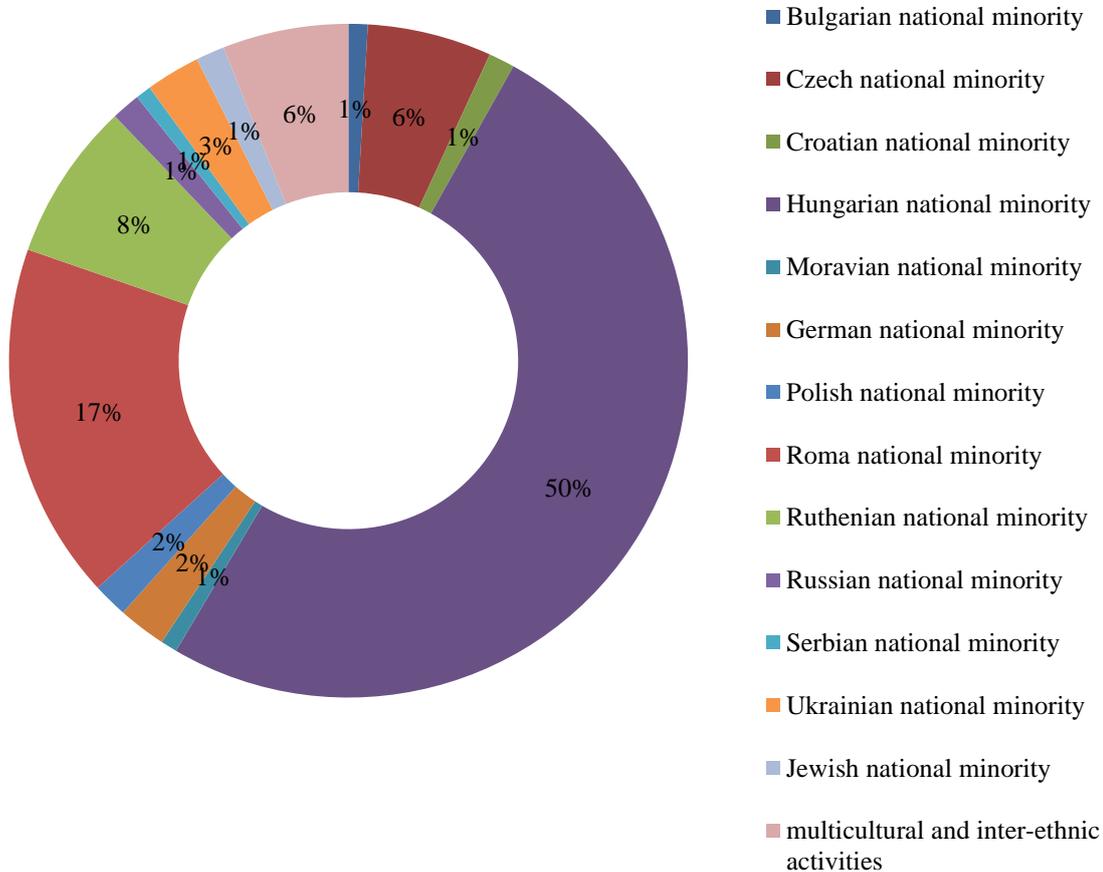
Table 4: Funds allocated in 2015

national minorities	funds provided on the basis of the 2015 allocation (in EUR)
Bulgarian national minority	35 504
Czech national minority	229 815
Croatian national minority	48 064
Hungarian national minority	1 955 296
Moravian national minority	30 489
German national minority	88 880
Polish national minority	64 683
Roma national minority	664 152
Ruthenian national minority	294 032
Russian national minority	53 377
Serbian national minority	28 706
Ukrainian national minority	100 673
Jewish national minority	52 825
multicultural and inter-ethnic activities	232 754
Total:	3 879 250

Chart 1: Distribution of the funds allocated under the 2015 CNM programme in percent

²³ For details on the method of distribution of the funds, see page 29 of the 2013 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities.

Distribution of the funds allocated under the 2015 CNM programme in percent



In accordance with § 8(1)(c) of the Grants Act, the Office of the Government published a Call for Grant Applications under the 2015 Culture of National Minorities programme (hereinafter the ‘Call for Applications’) on 19 November 2014 and the final deadline for applications was set at 19 January 2015.

In accordance with the call for applications, the 2015 CNM programme was divided into sub-programmes and priorities (see Annex 2: Structure of the CNM 2015 programme).

In connection with the publication of the call for applications, the Office of the Plenipotentiary held information seminars in six cities in the Slovak Republic between 3 December 2014 and 16 December 2014. The purpose of the seminars was to inform prospective applicants for the grants about the terms of the call for applications and the procedure for electronic registration of the applications.

Table 5: Overview of the cities where the information seminars were organised

Place	Date	Number of participants
Banská Bystrica - Town Hall	3.12.2014	22
Bratislava - Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic	4.12.2014	68
Komárno - Officers' Pavilion	11.12.2014	64
Rimavská Sobota - Municipal Culture Centre	15.12.2014	35
Košice - Thália Theatre	15.12.2014	52
Prešov - A. Duchnovič Theatre	15.12.2014	60
Total		301

In accordance with the call for applications, the applicants were to submit only one grant application that could comprise several projects under one or more sub-programmes, priorities or areas. In the first phase of review, the grant applications were checked for formal compliance. They were examined for completeness as to the compulsory attachments and specific particulars of the application project within the meaning of the Grants Act and the call for applications.

Complete projects or projects supplemented within the time limit set in the request for elimination of shortcomings in applications were forwarded for assessment to the panel for the evaluation of projects submitted under the 2015 Culture of National Minorities programme (hereinafter 'evaluation panels').

In accordance with the call for applications and other binding rules, 15 evaluation panels were set up, one for each national minority and two evaluation panels for the Hungarian national minority – one for the so-called written culture and one for the so-called live culture. In addition, a separate panel was set up for multicultural and inter-ethnic activities. The evaluation panels were set up in accordance with Decree No 21/2011 Coll. of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic of 24 January 2011 laying down the details of the composition, decision-making, organisation of work and procedure to be taken by the panels when evaluating grant applications and the criteria for the evaluation of applications for grants under the competence of the Office of the Government of the Slovak Republic, as amended by Decree No 281/2012 Coll. The members of the panels are mostly persons belonging to national minorities, representatives of regions and experts on the individual areas of culture, as well as representatives of State administration.

The process of evaluation of CNM projects follows the relevant legislation²⁴ governing the process of submission and formal review of grant applications, evaluation of individual projects, as well as the whole process of entering into contracts with successful applicants, including the statements of expenditure for the grants under the relevant call for applications.

The role of the evaluation panels is to examine the projects in technical terms, according to the criteria provided in the call for applications and legislation of general

²⁴ See the website of the Office of the Government Plenipotentiary for National Minorities:
<http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/legislativa-svsrrnm/>
<http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/kultura-narodnostnych-mensin-2016/>

application. They evaluate the effectiveness of the use of the grants and whether the amounts applied for are justifiable and proportionate. The panels evaluate individual projects without identifying the applicant and propose whether a project should be supported or not and how much funding should be provided for the project. The panels evaluate each project individually, on the basis of scores. Seven criteria are evaluated: the relevance of the project's objectives and goals, its quality and uniqueness, tradition and continuity, cultural and social importance, the project's specific contribution to the preservation and development of minority cultures, its target groups and feasibility of the budget. Each criterion consists of a scale of five indicators for the given criterion. The purposefulness and eligibility of the use of grants provided in the past is also examined, including compliance with the deadline for the submission of statements of expenditure.

In 2015, the Office of the Plenipotentiary sought to maintain the trend of the prompt conclusion of agreements and payment of the grants. The first agreements were signed already at the end of February 2015. EUR 1 558 552 had been provided already in the first half of the year and the amount rose to EUR 3 585 140 in early September 2015, which was more than 90 % of the total amount allocated for the promotion of cultures of national minorities. The availability of funding is the basic requirement for the promotion of the culture and languages of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic and it enables applicants to implement activities that make it possible to preserve and further develop their culture. The accelerated approach of the Office of the Government to the provision of funding to applicants helped stabilise and enhance the quality of a number of organisations, as well as carry out activities for the development of culture, language and education of national minorities living in the Slovak Republic.

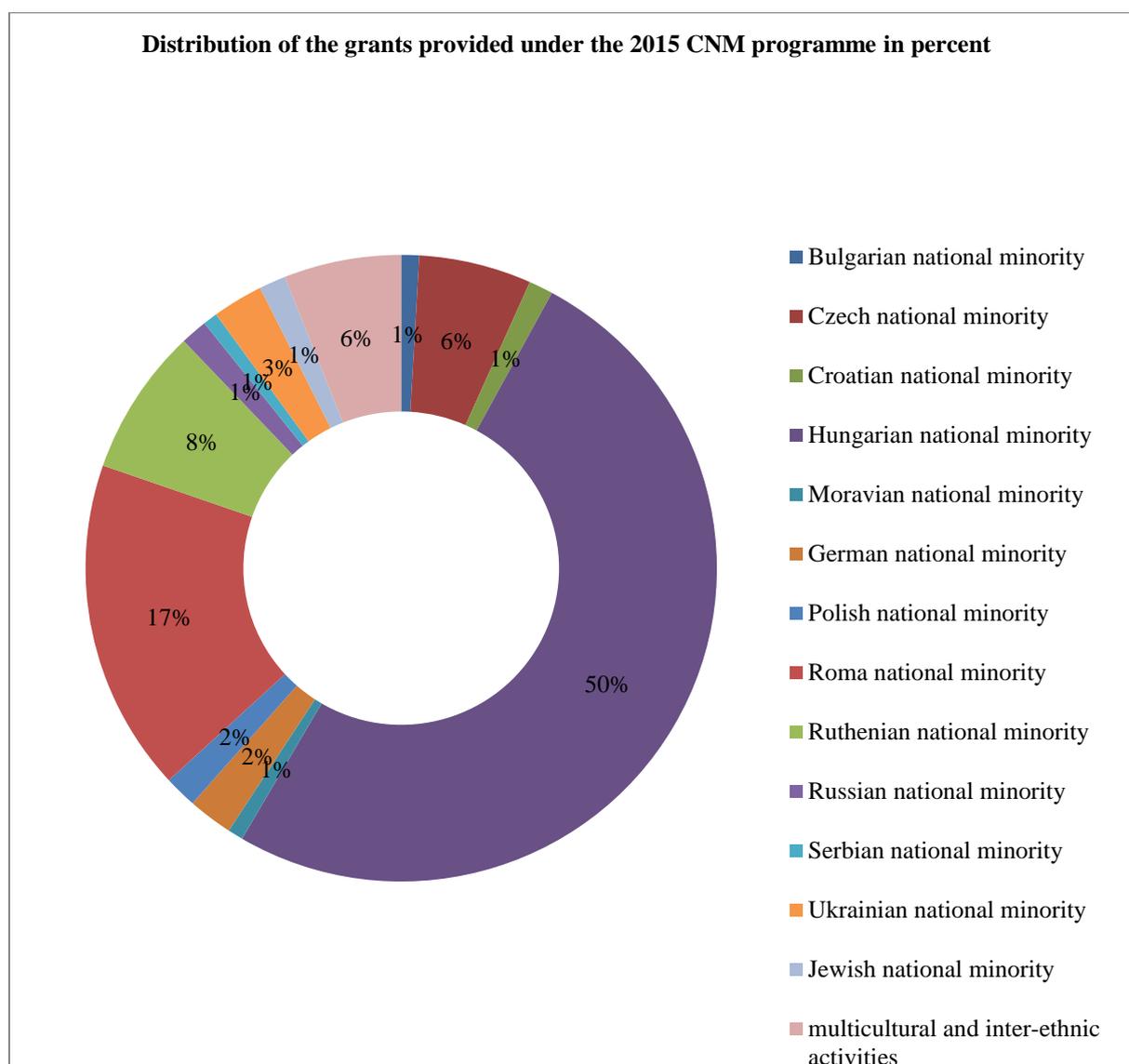
Table 6: Overview of the number of projects supported under the 1st call for applications by minority

National minority	Number of supported projects	Grant amount (in EUR)
Hungarian	718	1 955 296
Roma	155	624 250
Czech	42	214 761
Ruthenian	125	294 032
Ukrainian	19	100 673
German	14	88 880
Polish	17	64 683
Moravian	7	19 489
Croatian	7	48 064
Russian	16	53 377
Bulgarian	11	35 504
Jewish	18	52 825
Serbian	10	28 706
multicultural and inter-ethnic activities	63	232 754
Total	1 222	3 813 294

Table 7: Overview of the number of projects supported under the 2nd call for applications by minority

National minority	Number of supported projects	Grant amount (in EUR)
Czech	1	8 500
Moravian	2	11 000
Roma	15	39 902
Total	18	59 402

Chart 2: Distribution of the grants provided under the 2015 CNM programme in percent



Under the 1st call for applications, the evaluation panels recommended for support 1 222 projects of 596 applicants totalling EUR 3 813 294.

The funds allocated for the 2015 CNM programme were not fully utilised in the 1st call for applications. The remaining amount of EUR 65 941 was transferred to an additional Call for Grant Applications under the 2015 Culture of National Minorities programme (hereinafter the ‘additional 2015 CNM call for applications’) for the period between 15 June 2015 and 17 August 2015. The additional 2015 CNM call for applications applied to those national minorities that had not used up the funding allocated for 2015 in the 1st call, namely, the Czech national minority, in the amount of EUR 15 039, the Moravian minority, in the amount of EUR 11 000, and the Roma minority, in the amount of EUR 39 902.

In the additional 2015 CNM call for applications, the panels recommended for support 18 grant applications totalling EUR 59 402. With a view to the quality of the submitted projects, the panel for the Czech national minority did not allocate the full amount available for the promotion of the culture of the Czech national minority.

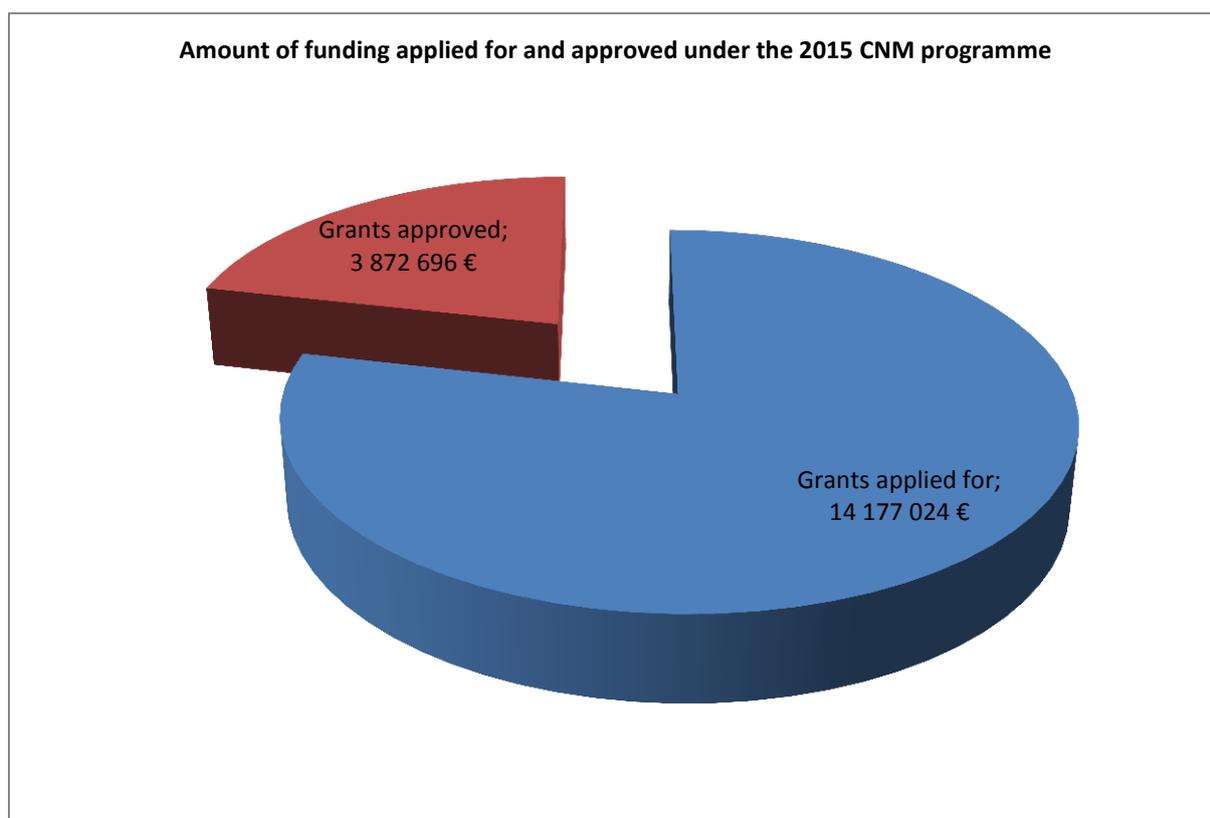
A total of 1 960 projects were submitted under the two calls for applications in the 2015 CNM programme. Of these:

- 135 were not evaluated and were excluded, in particular due to the incompleteness of applications, delivery after the deadline specified in the call or due to the fact that the applicant was not authorised to perform the activity for which the grant was sought, etc.;
- 585 projects were evaluated, but not supported;
- 37 projects were evaluated and approved, but not implemented, e.g. due to the applicant’s failure to enter into the agreement or in cases where the beneficiaries returned the grants provided, etc.;
- 1 203 projects were evaluated, approved and completed.

Chart 3: Number of supported and unsupported projects under the 2015 CNM programme



Chart 4: Amount of funding applied for and approved under the 2015 CNM programme



Selected statistical indicators reported on the basis of the electronic grant system for the 2015 CNM programme²⁵

In 2015, the CNM electronic system was further improved to streamline the communication with applicants and speed up the grant payment process. In an effort to provide the public with as accurate information as possible, the system was regularly updated with the aim of, among other things, providing the maximum amount of information to assist in evaluating the use of CNM funding.

In the text below, we describe some of the selected indicators, such as eligible applicants, applicants by scope of competence, priorities, etc., generated on the basis of the 2015 CNM electronic system.

The scope of applicants eligible for the CNM programme is defined under § 3(1) of the Grants Act. In terms of legal personality, the following applicants sought²⁶ grants under the 2015 CNM programme:

- 1 226 (67.18 %) civic associations,
- 283 (15.51 %) municipalities,
- 85 (4.66 %) budgetary or contributory organisations founded by a municipality.

²⁵An electronic grant system is used for analysing projects under the CNM programme, which, among other things, provides for the possibility of simple statistical reports.

²⁶ See Annex 3: Selected data on the 2015 CNM programme.

International organisations registered in the Slovak Republic were the smallest group of applicants: 5 (0.27 %) of the total number of applicants. No higher territorial units applied for grants under the 2015 CNM programme.

In 2015, grants were sought by a variety of parties from all eight self-governing regions.²⁷ The greatest number of applicants were from:

- Nitra self-governing region - 374 applicants (20.49 %),
- Trnava self-governing region - 373 applicants (20.44 %),
- Košice self-governing region - 324 applicants (17.75 %).

Only 15 applicants from the Trenčín self-governing region submitted grant applications under the 2015 CNM programme, which is only 0.82 % of the total number of applicants.

The 2015 CNM programme was divided into 3 sub-programmes and 15 priorities.²⁸ The highest number of supported projects were in the following areas:

- promotion of cultural activities and artistic creation - 482 applicants (38.87 %),
- educational projects - 206 applicants (16.61 %),
- activities of theatres and folk art ensembles and activities of cultural and church institutions - 139 applicants (11.21 %).



Source: Office of the Government archives

²⁷ See Annex 3: Selected data on the 2015 CNM programme.

²⁸ See Annex 3: Selected data on the 2015 CNM programme.

Part IV - Education and training for persons belonging to national minorities

The right of national minorities in the Slovak Republic to education and training is guaranteed by the Constitution and defined in detail in other legislation. Persons belonging to national minorities are provided education and training in schools and educational establishments using the minority language as the language of instruction and education. Education acquired in schools and educational establishments using a minority language as the language of instruction and education is equivalent to that acquired in schools using Slovak as the language of instruction.

The process of education and training in schools using a minority language as the language of instruction or teaching a minority language is carried out in accordance with the national educational programmes for the various levels of education.

Institutional oversight of the process of education and training for persons belonging to national minorities is carried out by the MESRS SR, which is the central government authority for kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools and higher education institutions, educational establishments, lifelong learning, science and technology and State care of youth and sports. Several fully or partly publicly-funded organisations, carrying out specific tasks in this area, fall under the administration of the MESRS SR.

4.1 Legislative and policy documents

Under § 34(2)(a) of the Constitution, **in addition to the right to master the State language, citizens belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups are guaranteed the right to education in their own language under the conditions laid down by law.** The said conditions are laid down in Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Schools Act’). In addition to the right to master the State language, the Schools Act provides children and pupils belonging to national minorities or ethnic groups with the right to education and training in their own tongue.

Other laws governing the relevant area include, in particular, Act No 596/2003 Coll. on State administration in the school system and school self-government and on amendments to certain laws, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Act on State Administration in the School System and School Self-government’), Act No 597/2003 Coll. on the financing of primary schools, secondary schools and educational establishments, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Act on the Financing of Schools’) and Act No 317/2009 Coll. on teachers and specialised staff and on amendments to certain laws, as amended (hereinafter the ‘Act on Teachers and Specialised Staff’).

Some of the laws relating to education and training for persons belonging to national minorities were amended in 2015:

- amendment to Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws;

Amendment: Act No 188/2015 Coll. amending Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 September 2015.

One of the purposes of the amendment to the School Act was to introduce further legislative measures in the area of segregation and discrimination in order to achieve such application of the Schools Act that does not allow for the confusion of special educational needs due to disability with special educational needs derived solely from a socially disadvantaged background. The reason is that the development of children in a socially disadvantaged environment does not automatically imply health disability, which is decisive in terms of the placement of a child or pupil in a special school or a special class. This will bring an improvement in the situation in education of pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds, a significant part of whom are children from marginalised Roma communities.

Thanks to the amendment to § 107, the Act now directly provides that children or pupils whose special educational needs result solely from their development in a socially disadvantaged environment may not be enrolled in a special school or a special kindergarten class, special primary school class or special class in a secondary school. In practice, this means that the fact that a child comes from a socially disadvantaged background may not constitute the reason for placement in a special school. It is explicitly and directly stated that children and pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds are to be placed in classes with other children and pupils. This measure clearly eliminates segregation. The changes also relate to the way specialised classes work – their purpose is to enable pupils who would not be able to master the curriculum in the relevant grade to ‘complete their knowledge’ and ‘catch up’. Pupils are placed in these class at the proposal of the homeroom teacher, after opinion of the school counsellor has been obtained and with consent of the parent (or guardian) for a maximum of one year. The changes also relate to the provision of allowances for pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. From 1 September 2016, these will only be granted to pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds who are placed in a ‘normal class’.

The amendment to the Schools Act extended § 33 to include paragraph (8)(d), which provides that administrators of secondary schools may, in specific cases, determine a lower number of students in a class than that referred to in § 33(7) of the Schools Act, namely nine students in the case of full-time programmes and five students in distance learning programmes. Within the meaning of the amendment, specific cases also include secondary schools in which education and training is provided in the State language and, at the same time, in the language of the relevant national minority, provided that it is not possible to open a class for education and training in the State language or in the language of the relevant national minority in accordance with § 33 (7) of the Schools Act.

- amendment to Act No 596/2003 Coll. on State administration in the school system and school self-government and on amendments to certain laws;

Amendment: Act No 188/2015 Coll. amending Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws, as amended, and amending certain laws, effective from 1 September 2015.

In § 13, the amendment tightens the State’s control mechanism over the activities of counselling and prevention educational establishments and enables the relevant bodies to revise the diagnostic procedures and proposals for the placement of children or pupils in a particular form of training and education. It enables the State School Inspection to consider incorrect diagnostics to be a serious shortcoming in the work of a special educational establishment or a counselling and prevention educational establishment.

The amendment to the Act added § 35a(1)(b), which lays down that schools and educational establishments included in the network are required to also provide the Ministry

with statistical data from annual surveys on the numbers of children, pupils and students and on their age structure, broken down by the language of instruction or education, nationality, field of study or vocational training and special educational needs as of 15 September of a school year.

4.2 Institutional framework

The key roles and competences regarding the process of education and training of persons belonging to national minorities are also carried out by the National Institute for Education (hereinafter ‘NIE’), the Methodology and Pedagogy Centre (hereinafter ‘MPC’), the State Vocational Education Institute (hereinafter ‘SVEI’), the National Institute of Certified Measurements of Education (hereinafter ‘NICME’), the State School Inspection (hereinafter ‘SSI’) and IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute.

Other authorities engaged in the area of education and training for persons belonging to national minorities include the **Council of the Minister for National Minority Schools** (hereinafter the ‘Council of the Minister’) established as an advisory body to the Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic for this area and for the implementation of the Language Charter within the meaning of Article 7(4) and Article 8 of the Charter.²⁹ The members of the Council of the Minister include representatives of the Hungarian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, Roma and German minorities. Other representatives, such as representatives of the MPC and NIE, and the Plenipotentiary are also invited to attend the sessions of the Council of the Minister. The scope of competence of the Council of the Minister includes the preparation of proposals aimed at ensuring and implementing the rights of national minorities to education in their mother tongue or instruction of their mother tongue in accordance with Article 8 of the Language Charter and improving the standard of instruction of the Slovak language and preparation of opinions on legislation of general application relating to education and training for national minorities.

The **Council** is one of the advisory bodies for the area of implementation of the Language Charter referred to in Article 7(4) of the Charter and for issues relating to national minorities and ethnic groups and persons belonging to them (see point 2.2.2).

4.3 Opportunities for education in minority languages

Persons belonging to national minorities receive education and training in kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, special schools and educational establishments that use Hungarian, Ukrainian, Ruthenian, German and Roma as the language of instruction or teach these languages. As of 15 September 2015, the network of schools and educational establishments comprised the following schools and educational establishments teaching minority languages³⁰:

²⁹ Under Article 7(4), the Language Charter states that in determining their policy with regard to regional or minority languages, the Parties shall take into consideration the needs and wishes expressed by the groups which use such languages. They are encouraged to establish bodies, if necessary, for the purpose of advising the authorities on all matters pertaining to regional or minority languages. Article 8 of the Language Charter focuses on the area of education.

³⁰ The list of schools and educational establishments using a minority language as the language of instruction/education is available at: <http://www.uips.sk/registre/vyber-skol-podla-kriterii>

A. Kindergartens

As of 15 September 2015, a total of 2 935 kindergartens were included in the network of schools and educational establishments in the Slovak Republic (public, private and church), of which 354 (12.06 %) were using a language of instruction other than Slovak, namely Hungarian, Ukrainian, German and others.

Table 8: Number of kindergartens in the Slovak Republic by language of education

language of education	number of kindergartens
Slovak-Hungarian	72
Hungarian	269
Ukrainian	5
German	1
other	7
TOTAL	354

B. Primary schools

In the 2015/2016 school year, there were a total of 2 113 primary schools included in the network of schools and educational establishments (2 133 in the 2014/2015 school year), of which 1 943 were public schools, 118 were church schools and 52 were private schools; the number of classes totalled 23 234.

Hungarian, Ukrainian or other languages were used as the language of instruction in a total of **267 primary school** and 1 884 classes as of 15 September 2015.

Table 9: Number of primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction as of 15 September 2015

language of instruction	number of primary schools
Slovak-Hungarian	28
Slovak-Ukrainian	1
Hungarian	230
Ukrainian	2
other	6
TOTAL	267

In primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction, there were:

- a total of 1 758 classes in public schools attended by a total of 27 740 pupils, of which 913 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 13 772 pupils and 845 were 5th to 9th grade classes with a total of 13 968 pupils;
- a total of 94 classes in church schools attended by 1 385 pupils, of which 46 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 628 pupils and 48 were 5th to 9th grade classes with 757 pupils;

In primary schools using Ukrainian as the language of instruction, there were:

- a total of 12 classes in public schools attended by 165 pupils, of which 7 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 89 pupils and 5 were 5th to 9th grade classes with 76 pupils;

In primary schools using German as the language of instruction, there were:

- a total of 4 classes in public schools attended by 36 pupils, all of which were 0 to 4th grade classes, i.e. there were no classes in the 5th to 9th grades;
- a total of 7 classes in private schools attended by 115 pupils, all of which were 0 to 4th grade classes, i.e. there were no classes in the 5th to 9th grades;

In primary schools using Ruthenian as the language of instruction, there was:

- 1 class in a public school attended by 8 pupils, which was a 0 to 4th grade class, i.e. there were no classes in the 5th to 9th grades;

In primary schools using Bulgarian as the language of instruction, there were:

- 8 classes in private schools attended by 63 pupils, of which 4 were 0 to 4th grade classes with 31 pupils and 4 were 5th to 9th grade classes with 32 pupils.³¹

C. Secondary schools

In the 2015/2016 school year, there were a total of 458 secondary schools included in the network of schools and educational establishments (of which 346 were public, 93 were private and 19 were church schools). Of the above number of secondary vocational schools, **43 were secondary vocational schools using a language of instruction other than Slovak** and 10 were bilingual secondary vocational schools.

At the same time, there were 246 gymnasias (of which 59 were bilingual). Of the above number of gymnasias, **31 were gymnasias using a language of instruction other than Slovak.**

Table 10: Number of secondary vocational schools by language of instruction as of 15 September 2015

language of instruction	number of secondary vocational schools
Slovak-Hungarian	32
Hungarian	11
TOTAL	43

Table 11: Number of bilingual secondary vocational schools by language of instruction as of 15 September 2015

language of instruction	number of secondary vocational schools
English	9
German	1
TOTAL	10

Table 12: Number of gymnasias by language of instruction as of 15 September 2015

language of instruction	number of gymnasias
Slovak-Hungarian	7
Hungarian	19
Ukrainian	1
other	4

³¹ See: Institute of Information and Prognoses in Education (IIPÉ) – Statistical Yearbooks available at <http://www.uips.sk/statistiky/statisticka-rocenka>

TOTAL	31
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Table 13: Number of bilingual gymnasia by language of instruction as of 15 September 2015

language of instruction	number of bilingual gymnasia
English	40
French	5
German	5
Russian	1
Spanish	7
Italian	1
TOTAL	59

Every year, the MESRS SR holds competitions for primary and secondary schools to promote the development of students' knowledge, skills and language competence. In the context of the national competitions, competition for pupils belonging to national minorities are also organised.

Table 14: Overview of the national rounds of competitions focusing on national minorities funded by the MESRS SR in 2015

Competition title	Organiser	Focus of the competition	budget 2015 in €
Colourful world - Coloriskere Luma	Romano Kher - Roma House	art competition for pupils from primary schools, primary schools of art and children's homes	900
Days of Mihály Tompa	CSEMADOK regional committee	recitation of poetry and prose by Mihály Tompa in Hungarian	2 780
BEAUTIFUL HUNGARIAN TONGUE – SZÉP MAGYAR BESZÉD	Sándor Márai Hungarian Gymnasium and Primary School, Košice	for pupils with Hungarian as the language of instruction	4 800
Know the Slovak Tongue	Construction Secondary Vocational School, Nové Zámky	language competition for pupils and students from primary schools and secondary school using Hungarian as the language of instruction	4 800
Geography competition 'The Carpathians'	Matej Korvín Hungarian Primary School, Kolárovo	geography competition	2010
Dobré slovo [Good word]	Hans Selye Hungarian Gymnasium, Komárno	language and literature competition in Slovak for pupils and students from primary and secondary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction	1 000
National competition of student works in the subjects of natural and social sciences and practical vocational training in Hungarian - CONTEST OF YOUNG TALENTS	Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia - Szlovákiai Magyar Pedagógusok Szövetsége, KOMÁRNO	a competition of student works in the subjects of natural and social sciences and practical vocational training in Hungarian	1 130

Alexander Duchnovič Festival of Drama and Artistic Word	Ruthenian-Ukrainian Union, Prešov	literary competition - drama	1 310
Duchovníč's Prešov	Ruthenian Revival in Slovakia, Prešov	literary contest	1 310
Contest in German poetry recitation and prose reading	Joint school - primary school with a kindergarten, Nitrianske Pravno	literary contest	1 300
Podunajská jar [Danube Spring]	CSEMADOK edification centre, Dunajská Streda	theatre contest for pupils with Hungarian as the language of instruction	1 740
National mail-in competition for primary school pupils and secondary school students in Hungarian – KATEDRA CONTEST	KATEDRA ALAPÍTVÁNY FOUNDATION	competition in social sciences	1 730
Prečo mám rád slovenčinu, prečo mám rád Slovensko [Why I Like the Slovak Language, Why I like Slovakia]	NIE, Bratislava	literary contest with international participation	4 980

National testing of 9th grade primary school pupils – Testing 9-2015³²

In April 2015, the NICME organised national testing of 9th grade primary school pupils. The tests were taken by 40 912 pupils, of whom 48.4 % were girls and 51.6 % were boys. 38 210 pupils were from schools using Slovak, 2 685 pupils were from schools using Hungarian and 17 pupils were from schools using Ukrainian as the language of instruction. 2 764 students with health disabilities (6.8 % of the total number of ninth grade pupils) also took the test. Testing 9-2015 was joined by 1 447 primary schools, of which 1 308 were schools using Slovak, 125 were schools using Hungarian, 12 were schools using Slovak and Hungarian and 2 were schools using Ukrainian as the language of instruction. The electronic form of Testing 9-2015 was taken by 111 primary schools with a total of 1 700 pupils.

The pupils were tested in the subjects of mathematics, Slovak language and literature, Hungarian language and literature, Slovak language and Slovak literature and Ukrainian language and literature. The mathematics test consisted of 20 assignments, the tests of Slovak language and literature and Hungarian language and literature contained 25 assignments, of which 20 were based on the text provided in the assignment. The test **assignments focused on logical thinking**, understanding of the text, **verification of the depth of knowledge and skills** and **application of knowledge** in practical contexts. For several years, the tests of the languages of instruction include assignments related to **reading comprehension**, in which students work with examples of both continuous and discontinuous texts. The mathematics test also contained **assignments put into the context of practical life** and the assignments included **charts, tables and an overview of formulas and units**. In order to solve the assignment, the pupils needed to understand the text of the assignment. Just like in previous years, the **objectivity of the testing sessions** was ensured by means of external control - in every class, a teacher from another school was watching over the test. The external party was present in the school from the time the tests received in the morning were unpacked until the answer sheets were enclosed in secure envelopes once the testing was completed in the

³²See: http://www.nucem.sk/documents//26/testovanie_9_2015/Zakladne_informacie_o_vysledkoch_T9-2015_final.pdf

afternoon. In 126 primary schools, the **regularity and objectivity** of Testing 9-2015 was watched over by the **State School Inspection**.

The **Hungarian language and literature test** was taken by 2 685 pupils and their **average score in the test was 63.8 %**. Girls were more successful in the test (66.7 %) than boys (61.1 %). The best results were achieved by pupils from the Bratislava region (72.2 %) followed by the Trnava region (68.8 %), pupils from the Košice region were the least successful (58.1 %). The scores of 9th grade primary school pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in the Hungarian language and literature test were lower than those of pupils without social disadvantages. The difference in the percentage score (8.2 %) was not of significant relevance. In the test on Hungarian language and literature, the scores of 9th grade primary school pupils from settlements with a population of over 100 000 (Bratislava, Košice) and pupils from schools where the number of 9th grade pupils was between 63 and 81 were significantly higher than the national average.

The **Slovak language and Slovak literature test** was taken by 2 685 pupils from schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction and their average percentage score in the test was 68.0 %. Girls achieved better results (71.7 %) than boys (64.7 %). The best results were achieved by pupils from the Bratislava region (84.3 %), pupils from the Banská Bystrica region were the least successful (63.3 %). The scores of 9th grade primary school pupils from socially disadvantaged backgrounds in the Slovak language and Slovak literature test were lower than those of pupils without social disadvantages. The difference in the percentage score (8.9 %) was not of significant relevance. In the test on Slovak language and Slovak literature, the scores of 9th grade primary school pupils from settlements with a population of over 100 000 (Bratislava, Košice) and pupils from schools where the number of 9th grade pupils was between 63 and 81 were significantly higher than the national average.

The **Ukrainian language and literature test** was taken by 17 pupils from two schools using Ukrainian as the language of instruction and their **average percentages score was 53.8 %**. The statistical evaluation of the Ukrainian language and literature test is not provided due to the low number of pupils tested.

MATURITA 2015 - Results of the external part of the *maturita* exams³³

In the 2014/2015 school year, the external part and written internal part of the *maturita* exams (Slovak secondary school exit exams) were taken by a total of **46 583 students**, either on the regular or the alternative date. The regular date of the *maturita* exams for 46 489 secondary school students was scheduled for 17 to 20 March 2015 and in selected schools (176) the exams took place in electronic form - 3 495 students took the exams in this form. 94 students sat the exams on the alternative date between 14 and 17 April 2015. 1 420 students with health disabilities (3.1 % of the total number of examined students) also took the exams.

In the 2014/2015 school years, the external part and written internal part of the *maturita* exams involved **726 secondary schools**, of which 656 were schools using Slovak,

³³See:

http://www.nucem.sk/documents//25/maturita_2015/vsledky_vyhodnotenia/Zakladne_informacie_o_vysledkoch_EC_MS_2015_final.pdf

40 were schools using Slovak and Hungarian, 29 were schools using Hungarian and one was a school using Ukrainian as the language of instruction.

Students took compulsory written tests of their languages of instruction, namely Slovak language and literature (43 782 students) and, at schools using a minority language as the language of instruction, Hungarian language and literature (2 008 students), Slovak language and Slovak literature (2 010 students) and Ukrainian language and literature (11 students).

Written *maturita* exams consisted of two parts: the **external part of the *maturita* exams**, which was assigned and evaluated centrally, and the **written internal part**, which was an essay on a given topic (in the language of instruction) or a short writing based on a structured assignment (foreign languages). The topics of the written internal part of the *maturita* exams were assigned centrally and students' works were evaluated by teachers using uniform evaluation guidelines and criteria developed by the NICME. **Every student compulsorily took *maturita* exams in one foreign language.** They could choose from English, German, Russian, French, Spanish or Italian. **The students of gymnasia compulsorily took foreign language *maturita* exams at the higher difficulty level of B2. Students from secondary vocational schools and conservatories could choose between level B1 (lower level) and B2 (higher level).** Students who chose mathematics as a *maturita* subject, took a written test only in the **external part of the exams**. The **outcome of the evaluation** of these parts of the *maturita* exams are **given in percentage scores** and, in the case of the external part of the *maturita* exams, **also in percentiles.**

Hungarian language and literature: The average percentage score in the test was 52.9 %. Students from gymnasia achieved a higher score (62.9 %) than students from secondary vocational schools and conservatories (45.3 %). 201 students (10.0%) had a percentage score of 33 % or less on the regular or alternative dates of the exams. In terms of the type of school, church schools (3.1% of students), private schools (16.3 % of students) and public schools (80.6% of students) achieved comparable results. The differences in the results between the regions where students took Hungarian language tests were not of significant relevance.

Slovak language and Slovak literature (schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction): **The average percentage score in the test was 45.6 %.** Students from gymnasia achieved a higher score (53.1 %) than students from secondary vocational schools and conservatories (39.8 %). 445 students (22.1%) had a percentage score of 33 % or less on the regular or alternative dates of the exams. In terms of the type of school, church schools (3.0% of the students), private schools (16.4 % of the students) and public schools (80.6% of the students) achieved comparable results. Students in the Bratislava region achieved the best results, the poorest results were recorded in the Banská Bystrica and Nitra regions. The difference between the results of students in the Bratislava and Banská Bystrica regions were at the level of moderate relevance. Other results were comparable.

Ukrainian language and literature: The average percentage score in the test was 85.7 %. The test was taken by 11 students of one gymnasium using Ukrainian as the language of instruction.

Within the meaning of § 7(a) of Decree No 137/2005 Coll. on school inspection, the **State School Inspection (SSI)** compiled the results of inspection activities for the purposes of the Report on the State of Education and Training in Schools and Educational Establishments

for the 2014/2015 School Year.³⁴This was already the 16th such report, which, in terms of structure, contains the findings of school inspections, conclusions of complaint investigations and attachments. The report serves as a source of information about the current situation and standard of pedagogical management and processes and the conditions for education and training in schools and educational establishments. A total of 217 inspections were conducted in schools using a minority language as the language of instruction. The SSI's inspection findings in the report are thoroughly compiled from the results in inspected schools and kindergartens included in the Slovak education and training system, which includes schools using a minority language as the language of instruction.

Situation and standard of pedagogical management and processes and the conditions for education and training

Kindergartens: 185 kindergartens were inspected - 6.4 % of the total number of kindergartens in Slovakia. Of these, 170 were public, 9 were church and 6 were private kindergartens. 153 were kindergartens using Slovak, 25 were using Hungarian and 7 were kindergartens using Slovak and Hungarian as the language of instruction.

Primary schools: inspections were conducted in 165 primary schools (7.7 % of the total number of primary schools in Slovakia), of which 152 were public, 10 were church and 3 were private kindergartens. 139 schools were using Slovak, 22 were using Hungarian and 4 were using Slovak and Hungarian as the language of instruction.

Secondary schools: comprehensive inspections were conducted in 29 gymnasia, which is 11.9 % of the total number of gymnasia in Slovakia. The inspected schools, which are four-year, eight-year and bilingual schools, included 1 private gymnasium, 6 church schools and 2 gymnasia using Hungarian as the language of instruction and 2 were schools with a Slovak-English bilingual department.

D. Higher education

Higher education is governed by Act No 131/2002 Coll. on higher education and on amendments to certain laws, as amended. We distinguish between public, state, private and foreign higher education institutions. In the academic year of 2015/2016, higher education was provided at 35 higher education institutions, of which 20 were public, 3 were state and 12 were private higher education institutions.

Higher education is also provided in several minority languages, in particular by the higher education institutions below.³⁵

- J. Selye University;
- Comenius University in Bratislava;
- University of Prešov in Prešov;
- Sts. Cyril and Methodius University in Trnava;
- Catholic University in Ružomberok;
- Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra;
- Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica.

³⁴See: https://www.ssiba.sk/admin/fckeditor/editor/userfiles/file/Dokumenty/velka_sprava/sprava_14_15.pdf

³⁵See: http://www.cvtisr.sk/buxus/generate_page.php?page_id=9573

4.4 Possibilities for further training for teachers and specialised staff in minority languages

The area of further training for teachers and specialised staff is governed by the **Act on Teachers and Specialised Staff**.

Professional development of teachers and specialised staff within the career system is implemented through continuous learning, creative activities related to the performance of educational or specialised activities and self-learning.

Opportunities for continuous training for teachers and specialised staff in **national minority languages** also exist and there are programmes focusing on the methodology of instruction of minority languages and other areas related to education and training for children and pupils belonging to national minorities.

According to the data available on the MESRS SR's website, there were 1 567 accredited continuous training programmes as of 26 March 2016.³⁶

The existing accredited programmes for schools with a language of instruction other than Slovak are:

- 'Improvement of communication competences in the subject of Slovak language and Slovak literature in primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Preparation of didactic tests for general education subjects with Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Implementation of the extension curriculum for art classes in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Practising communication skills in Slovak language classes at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Improvement of communication competences in the teaching of Slovak language for teachers at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Development of pupils' reading literacy in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Development of communication skills in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Development of reading literacy in primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Creation and application of didactic games and learning aids at the first stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction';
- 'Methods and forms of utilising historical realia in the teaching of Ruthenian language and literature';
- 'Ruthenian realia and the possibilities for including them in primary school curricula';
- 'Ruthenian language and teaching of Ruthenian in primary and secondary schools';
- 'Development of communication competences in Ukrainian language classes';
- 'Development of communication competences using texts of different styles in Ukrainian language classes'.

³⁶ See:

<https://www.minedu.sk/akreditacia-programov-doplnujuceho-pedagogickeho-studia-a-programov-kontinualneho-vzdelavania/>

In 2015, the MPC is continued to implement several national projects focusing on improvement of the situation of persons belonging to national minorities.

National project on marginalised Roma communities (MRC)

Between October 2011 and October 2015, the MPC implemented the national project “**Training for teaching staff towards inclusion of marginalised Roma communities**”, which was co-financed from the European Social Fund under the operational programme Education and was designed for those primary schools in the Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice self-governing regions, in which at least 20 % of pupils come from socially disadvantaged backgrounds.

The national project was coordinated and implemented by the head project office in Prešov, which also houses a regional project office, and by the regional project office in Banská Bystrica. The key activities under the project included training for teachers and specialised staff, support for the all-day education system and technical support for activities under the national project. The project was divided into three main activities - training for teachers and specialised staff, support for the all-day education system and technical support for activities under the project. The total budget for the project amounted to €24 989 002.³⁷

National project on MRC II

From February 2013 to November 2015, the MPC implemented the national project “**Inclusive model of education at the pre-primary level of the school system**”, which was aimed at improving the professional competence of teachers and specialised staff participating in education of children from MRC, thereby promoting their social inclusion at the pre-primary level of the school system. The project was designed for kindergartens in the Trnava, Trenčín, Nitra, Žilina, Banská Bystrica, Prešov and Košice regions. The project was implemented in selected kindergartens attended by children from MRC or located in a municipality in which members of MRC live.³⁸

National PRINED project

The purpose of the ‘**National PRoject for INclusive EDucation**’ (hereinafter the ‘PRINED’), implemented by the MPC between May 2014 and November 2015, was to provide intensive support for creating an inclusive environment in kindergartens and primary schools with the aim of preventing the unfounded placement of pupils in the system of special education. Acceleration programmes aimed at stimulating Roma children were used to improve the diagnostic process in kindergartens. The creation of inclusive teams in primary schools and training of these teams to acquire the professional competence necessary for the satisfaction and development of the specific educational needs of pupils from MRC will support inclusion in the context of primary schools.³⁹

National PCG project

The national project ‘**Professional and Career Development of Teachers**’ (PCG) was implemented by the MPC between October 2009 and October 2015 with the aim of

³⁷See: <http://web.eduk.sk/>

³⁸See: <http://www.npmrk2.sk/>

³⁹See: <http://www.prined.sk/>

creating an effective system of further training for teachers and specialised staff from schools and educational establishments, with an emphasis on the development of key competences.⁴⁰

4.5 Specific aspects of education and training for children belonging to national minorities in schools and educational establishments

The specific aspects of the educational needs of children belonging to national minorities include, in particular, the special approach to teaching certain subjects, measures to eliminate language barriers and the provision of quality textbooks, instructional texts and teaching aids used in schools. In 2015, the NIE implemented a number of projects in the area of pedagogical documents, research and provision of material and didactic resources for existing textbooks.

Within the meaning of Act No 245/2008 Coll. on education and training (Schools Act) and on amendments to certain laws, as amended, the following pedagogical documents were innovated in 2015:

Innovated Framework Curriculum (hereinafter ‘iFC’) – the MESRS SR approved the iFC for primary schools (primary and lower secondary education) on 6 February 2015 as part of the National Education Program for Primary Schools effective from 1 September 2015 and the iFC for gymnasia (with 4-year and 8-year educational programmes) on 20 March 2015 as part of the National Educational Programme for Gymnasia effective from 1 September 2015.

The innovated framework curricula for primary schools are available on the websites of the NIE and MESRS SR.⁴¹

a) Primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction

For the 1st stage of primary school, the innovated Framework Curriculum for primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction (effective from 2015) sets out 21 lessons for the language of instruction, i.e. the minority language (Hungarian, Ruthenian or Ukrainian) and literature, just like in the original Framework Curriculum for primary schools using a minority language as the language of instruction (effective from 2008). For the 2nd stage of primary school, the allocation was increased by one lesson and the iFC now sets out 24 lessons for the language of instruction and literature.

b) Primary schools teaching a minority language

In primary schools teaching a minority language, the majority of subjects are taught in Slovak. The allocations of lessons for the minority language (Ruthenian, Ukrainian or Roma) are provided in the table below.

⁴⁰See: <http://www.mpc-edu.sk/projekty/profesijny-a-karierovy-rast-pedagogickych-zamestnancov>

⁴¹See: <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program>

area of education	subject	grade of primary education					grade of lower secondary education					
		1.	2.	3.	4.	Σ	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	Σ
Language and communication	minority language and literature	1	2	2	2	7	2	2	2	3	3	12

Primary schools teaching Roma language and literature have been recommended to use the framework curricula for schools teaching a minority language in order to reinforce the instruction of the Slovak language for pupils from Roma communities from less stimulating environments, especially in the initial grades of primary education.

c) Gymnasia using a minority language as the language of instruction - 4-year educational programme

d) Gymnasia using a minority language as the language of instruction - 8-year educational programme

For gymnasia, the allocations of lessons for the language of instruction and literature and minority language and literature are the same. From 1 September 2015, the weekly allocation was increased from 8 to 12 lessons and from 26 to 31 lessons, respectively (see the table below).

area of education	subject	number of lessons GYM 4		number of lessons GYM 8	
		FC	iFC	FC	iFC
Language and communication	language of instruction and literature/minority language and literature	8	12	18 + 8 (26)	31

e) Slovak language and Slovak literature in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction

Along with the introduction of the innovated documents, from 1 September 2015, a uniform name of the teaching subject ‘Slovak language and Slovak literature’ (hereinafter ‘SLSL’) is used at all stages of schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction (primary, lower secondary and higher secondary education).

An increase in the allocation of lessons for SLSL in individual grades is subject to decision by the headmaster. In order to ensure a ‘reinforcement’ of teaching subjects, optional lessons have been made available in the iFC.⁴² This is an allocation of lessons that schools must use for teaching subjects in their innovated school educational programme (hereinafter ‘iSEP’).

In the 1st stage, 21 lessons are allocated for SLSL in the iFC, which is sufficient to acquire solid basics. In the 2nd grade, 6 lessons weekly are allocated for SLSL since reading

⁴²See: <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/inovovany-statny-vzdelavaci-program>

and writing in Slovak is introduced in this grade. For the 2nd grade, the iFC prescribes 24 lessons for SLSL. The NIE recommends to increase the allocation in the 7th and 9th grades: the NIE recommends to reinforce the communication and style component in the 7th grade, especially in linguistically poorly stimulating environments, while in the 9th grade, special attention needs to be paid to the subject of SLSL as regards in the preparation of pupils for national testing and secondary school admission examination. Unlike in primary education, for gymnasia (gymnasia with both eight-year and four-year educational programmes) the iFC specifies the number of SLSL lessons for the whole period of study and from 1 September 2015 the weekly allocation of lessons was increased from 8 to 12 lessons, which the schools can break down as per their needs and circumstances.

The mandatory division of classes into groups will also contribute to an enhancement of the standard of SLSL lessons. According to the notes provided in the iFC for both primary schools and gymnasia, *classes are to be divided for every SLSL lesson.*

The innovation of pedagogical documents for the area of Language and Communication for primary education and lower secondary education – comments and suggestions relating to the documents for Hungarian language and literature (hereinafter ‘HLL’) and Slovak language and Slovak literature were discussed by subject committees and recommended for approval by the MESRS SR; documents for higher secondary education were forwarded for comments to the Association of Headmasters of Schools with Hungarian as the Language of Instruction, selected secondary schools and education faculties of universities and, after the comments were incorporated into them, the documents were discussed by subject committees and recommended for approval by the MESRS SR. Experienced active teachers and representatives of larger schools participated in the development of the documents.

The NIE has innovated the educational standards for Ukrainian language and literature and Ruthenian language and literature for primary and lower secondary education. As regards gymnasia with a four-year educational programme, the document for Ukrainian language and literature has been innovated.

The NIE has innovated the educational standards for Roma language and literature for primary education, lower secondary education and higher secondary education. The educational standards were innovated in collaboration with Roma language teachers.

Effective from 1 September 2015, the MESRS SR approved the iSEP for primary education and for the second stage of primary school.

Effective from 1 September 2015, the MESRS SR approved the iSEP for gymnasia.

As part of the project, seminars for headmasters and methodologists on the iSEP were organised in collaboration with district state administration offices in regional capitals. The methodological documents related to the development of innovated educational programmes are available on the NIE’s website.⁴³

Several articles were published and lectures provided on the topic of the innovated iSEP and educational standards, as well as on the development of the innovated school educational programmes:

⁴³ See: <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/zavadzanie-isvp-v-zs-gym>

On 28 and 29 March 2015, a conference of the Association of Hungarian Teachers in Slovakia took place under the title ‘**Societal Challenges in Education – Questions and Answers**’. The conference was attended by a member of the NIE staff whose lecture in the secondary schools section focused on the topic of the innovated National Educational Programme and the innovated framework curriculum.

The topic of the iSEP was also the subject of lectures by members of the NIE staff at the International Expert Symposium ‘**Identifying and Developing Creativity**’ held on 11 November 2015 as part of the Science and Technology Week at the Faculty of Education of the J. Selye University in Komárno.⁴⁴ Articles dealing with the topic of the iSEP were also published in the *Jazyk a literatúra* [Language and Literature] magazine.⁴⁵

In 2015, one public tender was organised for a textbook for the subject of elementary studies (*provuka*) for the 1st grade of primary school. The Hungarian version (translation) of the textbook was distributed to primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction. In 2015, some textbooks and workbooks were reissued and further teaching materials were published to supplement existing textbooks. These were reissues for the subjects of Slovak language and Slovak literature for schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction, Hungarian language and literature and Ruthenian language and literature. The topic of creation and use of textbooks and other teaching materials was also a subject of the International Expert Symposium ‘Identifying and Developing Creativity’ held on 11 November 2015 as part of the Science and Technology Week at the Faculty of Education of the J. Selye University in Komárno.⁴⁶

In the area of **educational activities**, the NIE organised a series of specialised events in 2015 (refresher training for teachers from schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction, international conferences, congresses and others) focusing on the provision of advice and consultation with teachers at the primary stage of education and HLL and SLSL teachers at the lower and upper stages of education; lecturing and publishing activities on the

⁴⁴Döményová, A.: Innovated national educational programme for the subject of Slovak language and Slovak literature.

Ledneczká, Gy.: The position of the subject of Hungarian language and literature in the 1st stage of primary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction (Magyar nyelv és irodalom és helyzete és tagozatos oktatásban alsó hazai tantárgy irodalom).

⁴⁵Döményová, A. – Halászová, A.: *Čo je nové v inovovanom vzdelávacom štandarde pre slovenský jazyk a slovenskú literatúru v školách s vyučovacím jazykom maďarským* [What is new in the innovated educational standard for Slovak language and Slovak literature in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction]. In: *Jazyk a literatúra*. issue no. 4, volume 2., 2015, p. 35 – 53. ISSN 1339-7184. Facuna, J. *Možnosti sociálnej inklúzie Rómov cez inovácie štátnych vzdelávacích programov* [Possibilities for social inclusion of Roma through innovation of national educational programmes]. In: *Jazyk a literatúra*. issue no. 4, volume 2., 2015, pp. 22-34. ISSN 1339-7184.

Facuna, J. *Možnosti sociálnej inklúzie Rómov cez inovácie štátnych vzdelávacích programov* [Possibilities for social inclusion of Roma through innovation of national educational programmes]. In: *Jazyk a literatúra*. issue no. 4, volume 2., 2015, pp. 22-34. ISSN 1339-7184.

Ledneczká, Gy.: *Zmeny v inovovanom vzdelávacom štandarde pre maďarský jazyk a literatúra na primárnom stupni vzdelávania* [Changes in the innovated educational standard for Hungarian language and literature at the primary stage of education]. In: *Jazyk a literatúra* no. 4, volume 2., 2015, p. 3 – 21. ISSN 1339-7184.

Pišová, J.: *Inovovaný vzdelávací štandard pre ukrajinský jazyk a literatúru na 2. stupni základnej školy* [Innovated educational standard for Ukrainian language and literature in the 2nd stage of primary school]. In: *Jazyk a literatúra*, issues no. 5-6, volume 2, 2015, pp. 18-27. ISSN 1379-7184.

Tímárová, L.: *Zmeny v inovovanom vzdelávacom štandarde pre maďarský jazyk a literatúru na druhom stupni základnej školy* [Changes in the innovated educational standard for Hungarian language and literature at the second stage of primary school]. In: *Jazyk a literatúra*, issue no. 2, volume 2, 2015, pp. 45-50. ISSN 1379-7184.

⁴⁶Halászová, A.: *Ígyis lehet(ne)... Ízelítő az alsó tagozatos szlovák nyelv és szlovák irodalom órákból.* (This also is/could be a way... Moments from Slovak language and Slovak literature lessons).

topic of instruction of MLL and SLS; teacher training and measurement of the standard of education.

4.6 Support for improving the standard of instruction of the Slovak language to persons belonging to national minorities

In the context of its research project, the NIE monitored **the standard of instruction of the Slovak language and Slovak literature in primary and secondary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction**. In 2015, the quantitative and qualitative analysis of the data obtained continued and, at the same time, monitoring of the educational process in selected primary and secondary schools at all stages of education was conducted. Monitoring of the educational process is conducted in cooperation with members of the NIE's SLSL Subject Committee and students of the Faculty of Education of the J. Selye University in Komárno. The findings from the questionnaire survey and from monitoring of the educational process are being continuously processed, evaluated and incorporated into pedagogical documents for the subject of Slovak language and Slovak literature. The NIE presented its findings in Trnava (the Scientific Conference of the University of Sts Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Department of Education and Department of Slovak Language and Literature – 2015, 'Pre-gradual training for Slovak language and Slovak literature teachers – Reality and prospects') and in Komárno (International Scientific Conference of the J. Selye University – 'Innovation and creativity in education and science'). The presentations were published in the electronic proceedings of the conference.⁴⁷

Monitoring of the development of instruction of minority languages – in the first phase of the project, the NIE focused on updating data, information and evaluations acquired in connection with national and international commitments of the Slovak Republic and in the course of the monitoring processes related to the control mechanisms in the field of education and training for persons belonging to national minorities (e.g. the most significant legislative changes in this area, policy documents, etc.) and on mapping the current situation (needs, shortcomings) in education of national minorities in the Ukrainian and Ruthenian languages. The NIE's attention focused on responding to questions arising from the evaluation reports on the implementation of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages and the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities (the situation in the availability of and demand for instruction of the Ruthenian and Ukrainian languages; the number of kindergartens and primary and secondary schools using Ukrainian and Ruthenian as the language of instruction; ensuring continuity in the instruction of these language between the various levels of education; opportunities for informal education in Ukrainian and Ruthenian; possibilities regarding continuous training for primary and secondary school teachers of Ukrainian and Ruthenian).

National minorities, let's get to know each other – the objective is to prepare learning materials on the topic of multi-culturality for the 2nd stage of primary schools and

⁴⁷Döményová, A. – Halászová, A.: Language instruction data from the National Institute for Education's research project 'Monitoring of the Standard of Instruction of the Slovak Language in Primary Schools and Secondary Schools Using Hungarian as the Language of Instruction'. In: Proceedings of the scientific conference of the University of Sts Cyril and Methodius in Trnava, Department of Education and Department of Slovak Language and Literature – 2015, 'Pre-gradual training for Slovak language and Slovak literature teachers – Reality and prospects'), pp. 117-140. ISBN 978-80-8105-670-3.
Döményová, A. – Halászová, A.: Pedagogical documents and learning aids in planning and preparation for Slovak language and Slovak literature lessons. In: Proceedings from the international scientific conference of J. Selye University – 2015, 'Innovation and creativity in education and science', Theology and Humanities Section, pp. 433-457. ISBN 978-80-8122-145-3.

secondary schools, develop instructional texts focusing on the history and culture of the national minorities in the Slovak Republic in the context of the content of history classes in the 2nd stage of primary and in secondary schools.

Innovative education for the teaching staff of primary schools to increase their inter-cultural competences in the process of education for Roma pupils – the following activities were carried out in the context of this project financed by the Financial Mechanism of the European Economic Area and the State budget of the Slovak Republic:

Accredited innovative training of the MESRS SR entitled ‘Intercultural education in primary schools with pupils from Roma communities’. This training was attended by teaching staff from primary schools. It was successfully completed by 45 teachers.

Limited edition of learning materials available free of charge in printed form and on the NIE’s website.⁴⁸ This includes the following publications: Fairy tales in Slovak and Roma, Roma-Slovak reading textbook, Roma-Slovak reading textbook - workbook, Amari Romaňi Čhib/Our Roma language, Amari Romaňi Čhib/Our Roma language – workbook, History textbook (exploring the history of Roma), Roma-Slovak and Slovak-Roma dictionary (in the graphic design stage), Methodology Supporting Inclusive Education in Schools, Proceedings of International Conference (in the graphic design stage), translation of Roma History (in the graphic design stage).

Spolu s Rómami dosiahneme viac – Jekhetane le Romenca buter keraha – Together with Roma, we can achieve more – International Scientific Conference held under the auspices of Minister of Education, Science, Research and Sports of the Slovak Republic Juraj Draxler on 4 and 5 November 2015 in Tatra Hotel (Námestie 1. mája 5, Bratislava). The objective of the international scientific conference was to exchange the latest scientific findings and experience and formulate conclusions and practical recommendations for the development of inclusive education through innovative approaches respecting the cultural diversity of children and pupils. Given the subject and objectives of this conference, its participants included representatives of the Embassy of the Kingdom of Norway, Council of Europe, Government institutions, higher education institutions, primary and secondary schools, and non-governmental organisations from countries such as France, Belgium, Iceland, the Netherlands, Romania, Moldova, the Czech Republic and the Slovak Republic. The outcome of the international scientific conference will be conference proceedings published in Slovak and English.

NIE’s methodological portal – since the 2nd quarter of 2015, the draft versions of methodological documents for the innovated educational standards for SLSL, HLL, Ukrainian Language and Literature, Russian Language and Literature and Russian Language for teachers of primary and lower and higher secondary education have been in continuous development. For all grades in which the iSEP is implemented, models of the so-called annual teacher plans, methodological sheets, work and activity suggestions and worksheets are being developed and gradually made available on the NIE’s website.⁴⁹

Catalogue of target requirements for *maturita* exams – in 2015, a concept for the catalogue of target requirements was drawn up. Catalogues of target requirements for the individual subjects are currently being developed. The NIE is working together with experts and representatives of the teacher community. Due to the fact that the subject of Roma

⁴⁸See: <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/projekty-eea-grants-hlavne-aktivity/publikacie>

⁴⁹See: <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/zavadzanie-isvp-v-zs-gym/manualy-metodiky> a

http://www.statpedu.sk/sites/default/files/nove_dokumenty/metodiky/jazyk%20a%20komunikacia.pdf

language and literature is included among optional *maturita* subjects, the process of innovation of the ‘Target requirements for knowledge and skills of students taking *maturita* exams in Roma language and literature’ is currently underway.

The MESRS SR’s project ‘**Educational process of instruction of Slovak language and Slovak literature in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction**’ is scheduled for the 2016-2020 period and its objective is to improve the standard of instruction of Slovak language and Slovak literature in schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction and monitor the implementation of the innovated SEP. Even though the implementation of the project was scheduled to commence on 1 January 2016, the working groups were formed and first working meetings were held already in 2015 (Meeting with SLSL teachers – Žihárec, 16.11.2015), consultations (meeting with the investigators of the project Nitra Model of Instruction of the Slovak Language – Komárno, 12.11.2015).

The NIE is also organising several **competitions** for pupils and students from primary and secondary schools using Hungarian as the language of instruction, such as “**Poznaj slovenskú reč [Know the Slovak Tongue]**” or “**Prečo mám rád slovenčinu, prečo mám rád Slovensko [Why I Like the Slovak Language, Why I like Slovakia]**”. The objective of the competitions is to develop the pupils’ communication skills and habits so that they obtain high language competence and reading literacy and develop a positive attitude towards the Slovak language.⁵⁰

4.7 Equipment of schools and educational establishments using a minority language as the language of instruction or teaching a minority language

Schools are administered by their founders, who also provide the material and technical equipment for conducting the process of education and training, together with the didactic technology used in this process. Descriptions of the material and technical conditions form part of the school educational programme, while the SSI, being a State administration authority in the school system, oversees the standard of **material and technical conditions**. For the needs of schools, the SSI has published the evaluation criteria applicable to the 2015/2016 school year, as approved by the Chief School Inspector.⁵¹

The procedure and rules for the selection and approval of textbooks, workbooks, instructional texts (hereinafter ‘textbooks’) in print, digital and other appropriate forms for kindergartens, primary schools, secondary schools, primary schools of art, language schools and educational establishments in the Slovak Republic are governed by MESRS SR Regulation No 10/2011. The Regulation defines the roles of the MESRS SR, NIE and SVEI in the process of selection and approval of textbooks. The selection of suppliers of textbooks for the MESRS SR is subject to procedures laid down in specific legislation.

The MESRS SR supplied schools with approved textbooks free of charge, based on orders from schools. Textbooks for schools using a minority language as the language of instruction were provided by the Ministry in accordance with the **publishing plan**, depending on the orders from the individual schools. Textbooks, instructional texts and workbooks for compulsory teaching subjects were loaned to pupils and students by their primary and

⁵⁰See: <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/sutaze/poznaj-slovensku-rec> and <http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/sutaze/pekna-madarska-rec>
<http://www.statpedu.sk/clanky/sutaze/preco-mam-rad-slovencinu-preco-mam-rad-slovensko>

⁵¹See: <http://www.ssiba.sk/Default.aspx?text=g&id=36&lang=sk>

secondary schools free of charge. The updated publishing plan for textbooks approved for the 2014/15 school year is available on the website of the MESRS SR.⁵²

4.8 Informal education

The partly publicly-funded organisation of the MESRS SR, **IUVENTA - the Slovak Youth Institute**, operates in the area of informal education and work with the youth.

In 2015, IUVENTA implemented a number of projects and educational and other support activities, conducted research studies and published a number of publications focusing on the promotion and development of activities with young people belonging to national minorities or development of the competences of youth workers actively working with this youth group. These projects include:

The Erasmus+ EU programme for the area youth and sports

One of the key priorities of the Erasmus+ programme is equality and integration of young people with fewer opportunities into the programme. In 2015, the national Erasmus+ agency implemented a number of educational and informational activities for the area of youth and sports aimed at promoting the participation of Roma youth and other youth groups at risk of exclusion:

International training course ‘TurnINC A turning point to Inclusion’ for newcomers to the E+ programme focused on the inclusion of young people with fewer opportunities.

Czech and Slovak training course ‘Pridaj plyn’ [Step on the gas] - aimed at reducing the language barrier when working with groups with fewer opportunities. The national agency organised training focused on the implementation of the transnational initiatives under Key Action 2 – Strategic Partnerships. The target group were young people with fewer opportunities and people working with this target group.

International training course ‘ERASMUS+ for you’ – focused on the promotion of inclusion of Roma youth in the programme.

In 2015, nine projects engaging youth from national minorities and/or dealing with this topic in the context of informal education received support from the Erasmus+ programme: five projects involving Roma youth, one project with Roma youth and young people from the Hungarian minority, one project involving young people from the Hungarian minority, one project with youth from the Ruthenian minority and one project dealing with the issue of national minorities.

Educational activities:

Two national projects (hereinafter ‘NP’) were implemented in 2015: KomPrax – Competencies for Practice and PRAKTIK – practical skills through informal education in youth work.

National project KomPrax – Competencies for practice

The key target groups of the NP were young leaders (aged 15-17), youth leaders (18+ and volunteers) and youth workers (18+ professionals). The training was conducted by more than 160 professionally trained trainers of young leaders who provided support and mentoring

⁵²See: <https://edicnyportal.iedu.sk/>

in the period between training sessions and led and provided guidance to young people in the implementation of their own projects. Training was also offered in Hungarian, as necessary.

The NP included accredited post-secondary, interest and supplementary training on specialised topics intended for youth leaders (18+) and professional youth workers, such as 'Training for Roma leaders'. The NP was completed in June 2015.

National project PRAKTIK – practical skills through informal education in youth work

The target groups of this NP comprised professional youth workers, voluntary youth workers and children and youth aged between 7 to 24. Training for the target group of participants aged 7 to 24 was implemented as part of Activity 3 of the National Project: Ensuring the implementation and dissemination of youth programmes using innovative experiential learning methods. The monitored project indicators included the participation of children and youth from MRC in the Zaži-to [Experience-it] camps. A total of 231 pupils from MRC were engaged in activities during the period of the NP.

NP PRAKTIK did not offer specialised training courses in minority languages. The project was completed in October 2015.

Support for the participation of Roma youth

In October 2015, IUVENTA - the Slovak Youth Institute, provided support for the participation of Roma youth by joining the project of round tables between young people and politicians in the Prešov region. The round table meetings were preceded by weekend seminars/training sessions for the young people.

Promotion of informal education for children and youth – persons belonging to national minorities – through an MESRS SR grant administered by IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute

IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, is the administrator of an MESRS SR grant scheme for the area of youth – Youth Programmes 2014-2020. Under this programme, support was also provided to organisations bringing together persons belonging to national minorities or organisations working with minorities in the context of leisure activities and informal education for children and youth (e.g. the Union of Scouts of Hungarian Nationality).

Publications

In 2015, IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, conducted the study 'Inclusive Approaches in Leisure Time Education Programmes and Practice', which also mapped inclusive approaches in relation to children and youth of national minorities. A research report was published based on the study.

Neither this publication nor other methodological or informational materials published by IUVENTA – the Slovak Youth Institute, in 2015 were published in minority languages.

Projects planned for 2016

Erasmus+

International training course ALL INCLUSIVE focusing on encouraging and empowering youth workers and social workers to prepare and implement inclusive projects with mixed ability groups through the Erasmus+ programme.

International training course V4+Roma – focusing on the preparation of projects engaging Roma youth from V4 countries.

Preparation and implementation of an activity aimed at building partnerships between organisations working with Roma youth. The objective of the activity is to promote international cooperation between organisations facing language barriers. Therefore, the activity will be organised for regions close in terms of language – Hungary, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, and will focus on Key Action 2 – Youth Initiatives.

Activities:

In 2016, IUVENTA plans to implement support activities for greater inclusion of people with health disabilities and socially disadvantaged persons (this also covers the inclusion of children and young people belonging to national minorities), namely:

- Kompas - a training course on education towards human rights and the use of the manual for young people's education towards human rights;
- Kompasik- a training course on education towards human rights and the use of the manual for children's education towards human rights;
- training course on social inclusion of children and young people in leisure time and informal education.

The target groups of the training are, in particular, youth workers and youth leaders. With the aim of creating links between formal and informal education, the training will also be offered to primary and secondary school teachers.

Part V – The use of national minority languages

Under Article 34(1) and (2)(b) of the **Constitution**, citizens representing national minorities or ethnic groups in the Slovak Republic are guaranteed, under conditions set out by law, the **right to disseminate and receive information in their mother tongue and the right to use their language in official contact**. The use of national minority languages within the meaning of the constitutional provisions is governed by further legislation of general application, in particular **Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages, as amended** (hereinafter ‘Act No 184/1999 Coll.’) and **Act No 270/1995 Coll. on the State language of the Slovak Republic, as amended** (hereinafter ‘Act No 270/1995 Coll.’). Other laws governing the use of national minority languages concern a variety of areas, such as the administrative procedure, civil procedure, criminal procedure, elections, education, names and surnames, the registrar’s office, television and radio broadcasting, etc.

The protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities is the subject of international treaties and documents of a variety of organisations at different levels (the UN, the Council of Europe or the OSCE). The most important international treaties in the area of the protection of linguistic rights of national minorities binding on the Slovak Republic are the Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities and the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages.

Act No 184/1999 Coll. governs the use of national minority languages by citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to national minorities and lays down the rules for using minority languages in official contact and other areas in municipalities where the proportion of the population belonging to a national minority reaches the percentage threshold required by law. Under the Act, there are nine minority languages: **Bulgarian, Czech, Croatian, Hungarian, German, Polish, Roma, Ruthenian and Ukrainian**. This means that Act No 184/1999 Coll. governs, in particular, the use of national minority languages in official contact, signs in minority languages, local referenda on modification of names of municipalities in minority languages, provision of information in minority languages, the powers of the Office of the Government in the area of the use of national minority languages and administrative offences in the area of the use of national minority languages. Under certain other provisions, Act No 184/1999 Coll. refers to other existing legislation.

Act No 270/1995 Coll. governs the use of the State language, which is the Slovak language in the Slovak Republic, as the basic means of communication and lays down the rules for the use of other languages in relation to the State language, including minority languages. This is the basic standard governing the use of languages in the territory of Slovak Republic, which is the *lex specialis* in respect of the standards governing the use of minority languages.

Act No 270/1995 Coll. and Act No 184/1999 Coll. were amended in 2011 in order to provide for greater protection of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities living in the territory of the Slovak Republic so that compliance with the human rights principles enshrined in international conventions binding on the Slovak Republic is reinforced.

Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No 535/2011 implementing certain provisions of Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages, as amended, which lays down the details of the provision of information about the possibilities for using national minority languages in official contact and the form of bilingual official documents, is a regulation that implements Act No 184/1999 Coll.

The amendment to Act No 184/1999 Coll. effective from 1 July 2011 repealed Act No 191/1994 Coll. on displaying the names of municipalities in national minority languages (the so-called municipal signs act), which contained a list of the names of municipalities in minority languages. From 1 July 2011, the displaying of names of municipalities in minority languages is governed by Act No 184/1999 Coll. and, from 1 January 2012, by **Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No 221/1999 Coll. issuing the list of municipalities in which citizens of the Slovak Republic belonging to a national minority account for at least 20 % of the population, as amended by Regulation of the Government of the Slovak Republic No 534/2011 Coll.** (hereinafter ‘Government Regulation No 221/1999 Coll.’). Through the amendment to Government Regulation No 221/1999 Coll. the names of municipalities in minority languages were added to their names in Slovak. Hence, a new official list of designations of municipalities in minority languages was established.

The designations of municipalities in minority languages provided in Government Regulation No 221/1999 Coll. are used in public contact, within the scope defined under § 4(1) to (3) of Act No 184/1999 Coll. This means that under the applicable legislation, the name of the municipality in the minority language is displayed on a special road sign under the sign displaying its official name in the State language. These signs mark the beginning and end of the municipality. In addition, Act No 184/1999 Coll. makes it possible to display names of municipalities in minority languages together with their official name in the following specific cases: designations of train stations, bus stations, airports and ports, if situated in a municipality falling under the scope of Act No 184/1999 Coll. Everywhere else, the official name of the municipality is used, without parallel indication of its name in a minority language.



Source: photo by SITA

The applicability of Act No 184/1999 Coll. is territorially limited and most of its provisions apply solely in the territory of municipalities listed in Government Regulation No 221/1999 Coll. Exceptions include the use of minority languages in oral communication with civil servants, subject to consent of the civil servant and the persons involved in the proceedings, and the use of geographical indications in publications and other situations where minority languages are used.

5.1 Application of Act No 184/1999 Coll. on the use of national minority languages, as amended

Within the meaning of § 7a(1) of Act No 184/1999 Coll., the Office of the Government provides **expert and methodological assistance** to public authorities and organisational units of security and rescue forces with regard to the implementation of this Act. To this end, an **expert committee** was set up at the Office of the Government, which is a permanent advisory body to the Head of the Civil Servants' Office. Members of the committee include representatives of the Office of the Government, the MC SR, the Ministry of Transport, Construction and Regional Development of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MTCRD SR'), the Ministry of Finance of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MF SR'), the MLSAF SR, the Ministry of the Environment of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MEn SR'), the Ministry of Health of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MH SR'), the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'MARD SR'), the Geodesy, Cartography and Cadastre Authority of the Slovak Republic (hereinafter the 'GCCA SR') and the ASTV.

The committee's objective is to provide expert and methodological assistance to public authorities and organisational units of security and rescue forces with regard to the implementation of the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages and prepare opinions on complaints filed under the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages.

Within the meaning of § 7a(1) of Act No 184/1999 Coll., the Office of the Government also provides, through the Office of the Plenipotentiary, expert and methodological assistance to public authorities in the area of management of **terminology** in minority languages and creation of specialised glossaries. These specialised glossaries are intended to simplify, facilitate and streamline the use of minority languages in official contact. They are designed, in particular, for civil servants using minority languages in day-to-day communication, as well as for interpreters and translators working with specialised texts from the area of public administration and citizens who need to use technical terminology in minority languages when attending to their matters. A terminology framework in the State language has been created for the development of the glossaries, which was discussed with all the departments concerned and which represents a database of the most frequently used terms and phrases from selected areas of State administration and local self-government in the Slovak Republic.

To date, the following glossaries have been made available on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary: **Slovak-Hungarian specialised glossary**, **Slovak-Roma specialised glossary** and **Slovak-Ruthenian specialised glossary**. The glossaries were developed by recognised experts working as lawyers and linguists and using the respective minority languages. In 2015, an important contribution to the management of terminology in the Ukrainian language, within the meaning of § 7a(1) of Act No 184/1999 Coll., was the preparation of the **Slovak-Ukrainian specialised glossary** initiated by the Plenipotentiary. The ambition of this glossary is to create a terminology framework, which could significantly simplify written communication of persons belonging to the Ukrainian national minority with public authorities and local self-government authorities in the Slovak Republic. The glossary was developed by recognised experts working as lawyers and linguists and using the Ukrainian language. The Slovak-Ukrainian specialised glossary is also available on the website of the Office of the Plenipotentiary.⁵³ At the initiative of the Plenipotentiary, the

⁵³ See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/odborne-terminologicke-slovniky-v-jazykoch-narodnostnych-mensin/>

Slovak part of the specialised glossaries was subjected to professional linguistic review, which completed the work on the glossaries.

In accordance with § 7b of the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages, **administrative offences** in the area of the use of national minority languages are dealt with by the Office of the Government. These matters are acted upon on behalf of the Office of the Government by the Head of the Civil Servants' Office at the first-instance level and by the Head of the Office of the Government at the second-instance level. The expert committee also prepares recommendations for the Head of the Civil Servants' Office with regard to complaints concerning suspected infringements of the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages. In the context of the application of Act No 184/1999 Coll., in 2015 the Office of the Head of the Civil Servants' Office received two complaints from natural persons concerning suspected infringements of § 2(5) of Act No 184/1999 Coll. and one complaint from a legal person concerning suspected infringements of § 2(6) and § 4(1) of Act No 184/1999 Coll. in 68 Ruthenian municipalities. In order to determine the actual state of affairs, an inspection to investigate the allegations was conducted in selected Ruthenian municipalities in December 2015. In the course of the inspection, methodological guidance was provided to municipalities in respect of the implementation of the obligations arising from Act No 184/1999 Coll. In 56 cases, the shortcomings identified were rectified and in the remaining cases, the investigated matters are pending.

In accordance with § 7a of the Act on the Use of National Minority Languages, every two years the Office of the Government presents to the Government the **Report on the State of the Use of Minority Languages in the Slovak Republic** (hereinafter the 'language report'). Before it is submitted, the Council of the Government takes a position on the language report. In order to collect information for the preparation of the report, the Office of the Government is entitled to request public authorities to provide information and written documentation on the use of minority languages in the areas of their competence. The language report covering the 2013-2014 period was discussed on 10 December 2014.⁵⁴ The next language report will be submitted at a Government session in December 2016.

5.2 Language topics dealt with by the Committee on National Minorities and Ethnic Groups

Russian and Serbian languages

The process of recognition of Russian and Serbian as minority languages in the Slovak Republic within the meaning of the Language Charter, reinitiated in 2014 by the Office of the Plenipotentiary after the Committee approved the proposal for their recognition, continued intensively in 2015. The Office of the Plenipotentiary held a number of meetings with the relevant parties and took further steps in order to successfully finalise the entire process. The proposal to recognise the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of Part II of the Language Charter was approved by the Council of the Government at its 22nd session on 15 October 2015. Subsequently, the relevant document was approved by the Government through Resolution No 618/2015 of 18 November 2015.⁵⁵ This Resolution tasked the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister of Foreign and European Affairs of the Slovak Republic to notify the Secretary General of the Council of Europe of the recognition of the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of Part II of the Language Charter. In accordance with the above Resolution, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe was

⁵⁴ See: <http://www.narodnostnemensiny.gov.sk/jazyky-narodnostnych-mensin/>

⁵⁵ See: <http://www.rokovania.sk/Rokovanie.aspx/BodRokovaniaDetail?idMaterial=25128>

notified of this fact by the Permanent Representative of the Slovak Republic to the Council of Europe in a letter dated 25 November 2015. The Slovak Republic's declaration was registered by the Secretariat General of the Council of Europe on 27 November 2015. Subsequently, the Council of Europe published on its website the information that the Slovak Republic declared its recognition of the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of Part II of the Language Charter.⁵⁶

⁵⁶ See: <http://www.coe.int/en/web/conventions/search-on-treaties/-/conventions/treaty/148/declarations>

Conclusion

The purpose of the present 2015 Report on the Situation and Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities is to provide an objective picture of the situation of persons belonging to national minorities living in the Slovak Republic based on the results of monitoring and analyses of adherence to the rights of persons belonging to national minorities by State administration authorities, the authorities of municipalities and self-governing regions and other relevant bodies.

Following from the content of the previous reports, its primary ambition is to focus on recent developments in this area in the period under review, i.e. on areas where changes occurred in the period under review, and provide up-to-date data, information and evaluations concerning the key areas related to the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities in the Slovak Republic.

In this sense, the key matter was the participative process of preparation of the Action Plan to Protect the Rights of Persons Belonging to National Minorities and Ethnic Groups as one of the tasks arising from the National Strategy for the Protection and Promotion of Human Rights in the Slovak Republic in the area of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities.

A significant part of the Plenipotentiary's Report provides information about the ongoing dialogue with international monitoring mechanisms relevant to the area of the protection and promotion of the rights of persons belonging to national minorities or protection of regional or minority languages over the period under review, including the successful completion of the initiative of the Plenipotentiary to recognise the Russian and Serbian languages as minority languages in the Slovak Republic for the purposes of Part II of the Language Charter.

The report provides comprehensive information, in particular, about the key areas concerning the situation and rights of persons belonging to national minorities, which inherently include the area of participation, i.e. the participation of persons belonging to national minorities in public governance and mechanisms of co-decision-making on public affairs, education and training, the use of languages and promotion of the culture of national minorities' the information about these areas includes data provided by the relevant ministries and institutions.

List of annexes

1. Activities of self-governing regions in the area of support for national minorities.
2. Structure of the CNM 2015 programme.
3. Selected data on the 2015 CNM programme.

Annex 1: Activities of self-governing regions in the area of support for national minorities

Self-governing region	Policy focusing on persons belonging to national minorities	Funds allocated for national minorities (in EUR)	Activities
Banská Bystrica self-governing region	none developed	n/a	<p>Various activities in cultural institutions under the administration of the Banská Bystrica self-governing region:</p> <p>Edification centres: Hontiansko-ipeľské, Gemersko-malohontské, Pohronské, Podpolianske and Novohradské.</p> <p>Libraries: Ľudovít Štúr Regional Library, Novohradská Library, Ján Kollár Library, Hontiansko-novohradská Library, Matej Hrebenda Library.</p> <p>Regional museums and galleries: Gemersko-malohontské Museum in Rimavská Sobota, Novohradské Museum and Gallery in Lučenec.</p>
Bratislava self-governing region	none developed	n/a	<p>The Bratislava self-governing region participated in the event Tomášovská Thália 2015, celebrations of the 770th anniversary of the municipality of Boldog and the event 'Engerau – the forgotten story of Petržalka'.</p> <p>In the context of Bratislava's regional grant scheme to promote culture, the Bratislava self-governing region supported the following projects: website of the Non-investment Fund of Jewish Cultural Heritage, the IfjúSzivek Dance Theatre, the Croatian Culture Union in Čučovo, the Danube Culture Festival in Jarovce, publication about the history of the municipality of Kalinkovo, support for the Holocaust Documentation Centre, the summer festival of the city of Senec, support for Csemadok's publications about cemeteries in Hungarian, and others.</p> <p>Various activities in cultural establishments administered by the Bratislava self-governing region: Malokarpatské Museum in Pezinok and Malokarpatská Library in Pezinok, Astorka Festival.</p>
Košice self-governing region	The Culture and Tourism Department has prepared a development plan for the Romathan Theatre – extension of its scope of activities to include edification activities, which should improve the care of traditional Roma folk culture	In 2015 10 900 - activities related to national minorities	The culture of national minorities is developed by six edification establishments under the administration of the Košice self-governing region.
Nitra self-governing region	n/a	27 369	Various activities in cultural establishments under the administration of the Nitra self-governing

			<p>region: Edification centres: Regional Edification Centre in Nitra and five local edification centres. Karol Kmeť Regional Library in Nitra. Museums: Ján Thain Museum in Nové Zámky, Podunajské Museum in Komárno. Karol Spišák Old Theatre in Nitra.</p>
Prešov self-governing region	n/a	n/a	<p>Various activities in cultural establishments under the administration of the Prešov self-governing region: Edification centres: Vihorlatské Edification Centre in Humenné, Podduklianske Edification Centre, Ľubovnianske Edification Centre in Stará Ľubovňa, Hornozemplinske Edification Centre in Vranov nad Topľou, Podtatranské Edification Centre in Poprad and Hornošarišské Edification Centre in Bardejov. Libraries: David Gutgesel District Library in Bardejov, Podtatranská Library in Poprad, Podduklianska Library in Svidník, Vihorlatská Library in Humenné, Ľubovnianska Library in Stará Ľubovňa, Hornozemplínska Library in Vranov nad Topľou, P. O. Hviezdoslav Library in Prešov. Jonáš Záborský Theatre in Prešov – the theatre’s edification activities. Regional museums and galleries: Regional Museum in Prešov, Vihorlatské Museum in Humenné, National History Museum in Hanušovce nad Topľou, Šarišské Museum in Bardejov, Ľubovnianske Museum, Podtatranské Museum in Poprad, Museum in Kežmarok, Šarišská Gallery in Prešov and Tatranská Gallery in Poprad.</p>
Trenčín self-governing region	n/a	n/a	<p>Various activities in cultural establishments under the administration of the Trenčín self-governing region: Regional Culture Centre in Prievidza organised several events relating to national minorities, such as the Meeting of Singing Groups and Associations of Carpathian Germans from the Pravno Valley or the project entitled ‘In the footsteps of Jewish culture in Slovakia’. In 2015, the Regional Culture Centre in Prievidza organised five creative folk craft workshops attended mostly by children of the Roma nationality.</p>
Tnava self-governing region	n/a	2 325	<p>Support for organisations of the Czech, Hungarian and Roma minorities in the context of the Call for Applications under the programme ‘Support for Culture and Art Activities in 2015’. Various activities of 18 cultural establishments under the administration of the Tnava self-governing region.</p>
Žilina self-governing region	none developed	n/a	<p>Various activities in cultural establishments under the administration of the Žilina self-governing region: Edification centres: Regional Culture Centre in Žilina, Turčianske Culture Centre in Martin, Oravské Culture Centre in Dolný Kubín, Kysucké Culture Centre in Čadca, Liptovské Culture Centre in Liptovský Mikuláš. Libraries: Regional Library in Žilina, Kysucká Library in Čadca, Turčianska Library in Martin, Liptovská Library of Gašpar Fejérpataky-Belopotocký in Liptovský Mikuláš, Oravská Library of Anton Habovštiak in Dolný Kubín. Museums and galleries: Kysucké Museum in Čadca, Liptovské Museum in Ružomberok, Oravské Museum of Pavla Országha Hviezdoslava in Dolný Kubín, Považské Museum in Žilina,</p>

			<p>Kysucká Gallery in Oščadnica, Oravská Gallery in Dolný Kubín, Liptovská Gallery of Peter Michal Bohúň in Liptovský Mikuláš, Považská Art Gallery in Žilina, Turčianska Gallery in Martin.</p> <p>Theatres: Žilina Puppet Theatre, Slovak Chamber Theatre in Martin.</p> <p>Regional Observatory in Žilina.</p>
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Annex 2: Structure of the CNM 2015 programme

In accordance with the call for applications and its annexes, the 2015 CNM programme was divided into sub-programmes and priorities as follows:

1. Promotion of the preservation, expression, protection and development of the identity and cultural values of national minorities

- 1.1. publishing activities, support for periodical and non-periodical press, audio and multimedia carriers and electronic content,
- 1.2. activities of theatres and folk art ensembles and activities of cultural and church institutions,
- 1.3. promotion of cultural activities and artistic creation,
- 1.4. research into the culture, life, history, language and identity of persons belonging to minorities,
- 1.5. educational projects,
- 1.6. interest and leisure activities,
- 1.7. foreign and international cultural activities.

2. Promotion of education and training on the rights of national minorities

- 2.1. support for education and training for children and youth in the area of the rights of national minorities,
- 2.2. support for education and seminars on the rights of national minorities,
- 2.3. analytical, expert and publishing activities in the area of the rights of national minorities.

3. Promotion of inter-ethnic and inter-cultural dialogue and understanding between the majority society and national minorities and ethnic groups

- 3.1. promotion of mutual understanding and convergence between ethnic groups and between the majority society and minorities, as well as between the individual ethnic minorities,
- 3.2. projects focusing on the identification and recognition of common cultural, artistic and scientific values and traditions,
- 3.3. projects focusing on uncovering and exploring family, local and regional history, traditions, personalities and monuments in ethnically mixed environments,
- 3.4. promotion of the inclusion of respect, understanding and tolerance towards minority languages and cultures in the system of education and training and in the mass media,
- 3.5. promotion of exchange programmes, study visits, joint training events, and knowledge and art competitions for children and youth from different ethnic and language groups.

Annex 3: Selected data on the 2015 CNM programme

Chart 1: Number of supported projects by the applicant's legal form

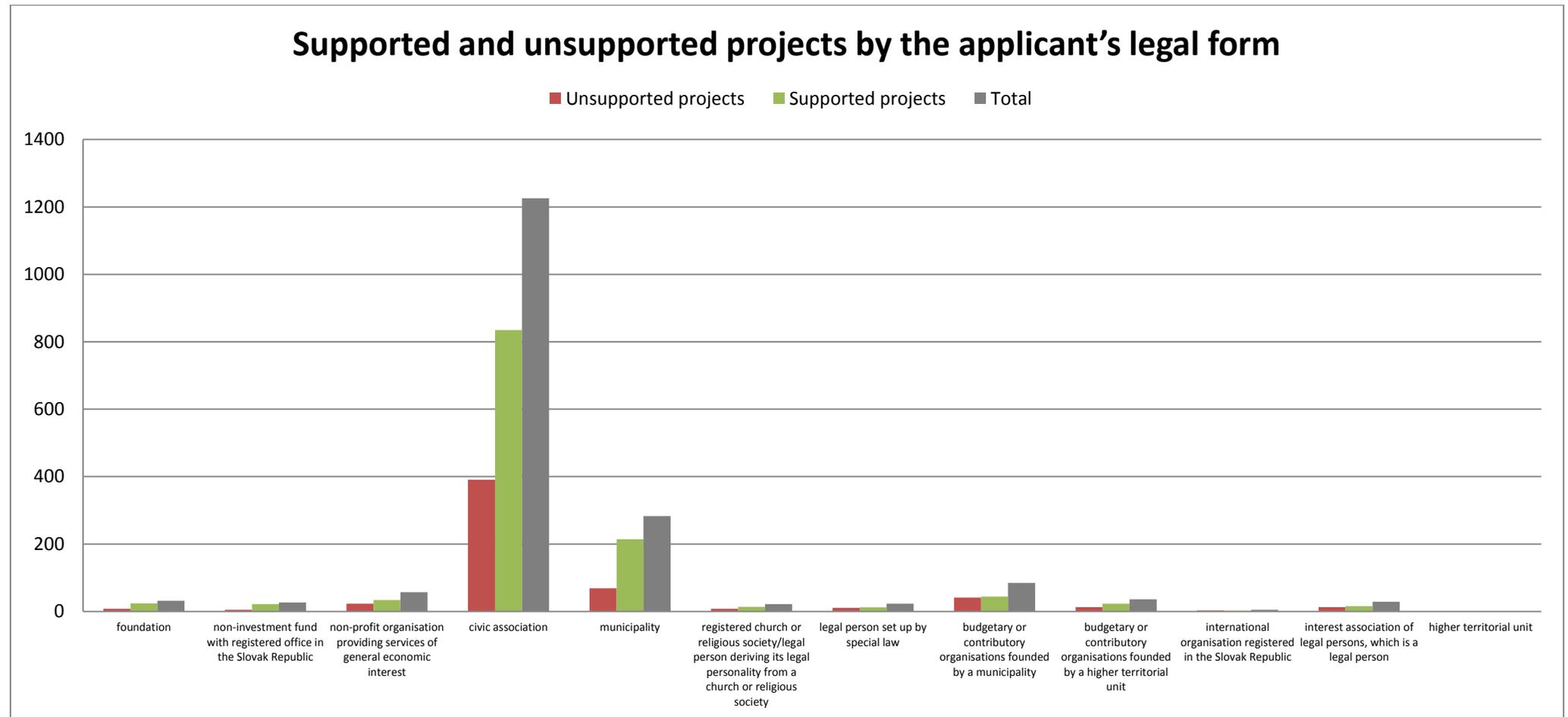


Chart 2: Approved grant amounts by the applicant's legal form

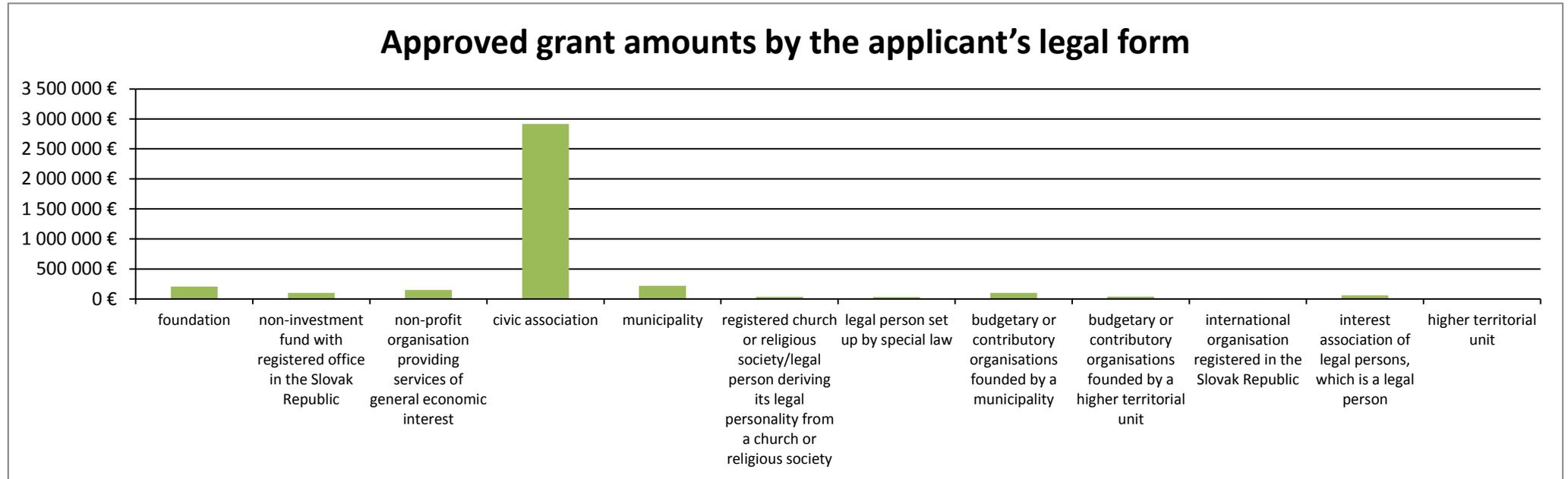


Chart 3: Number of supported and unsupported projects by the applicant's registered office

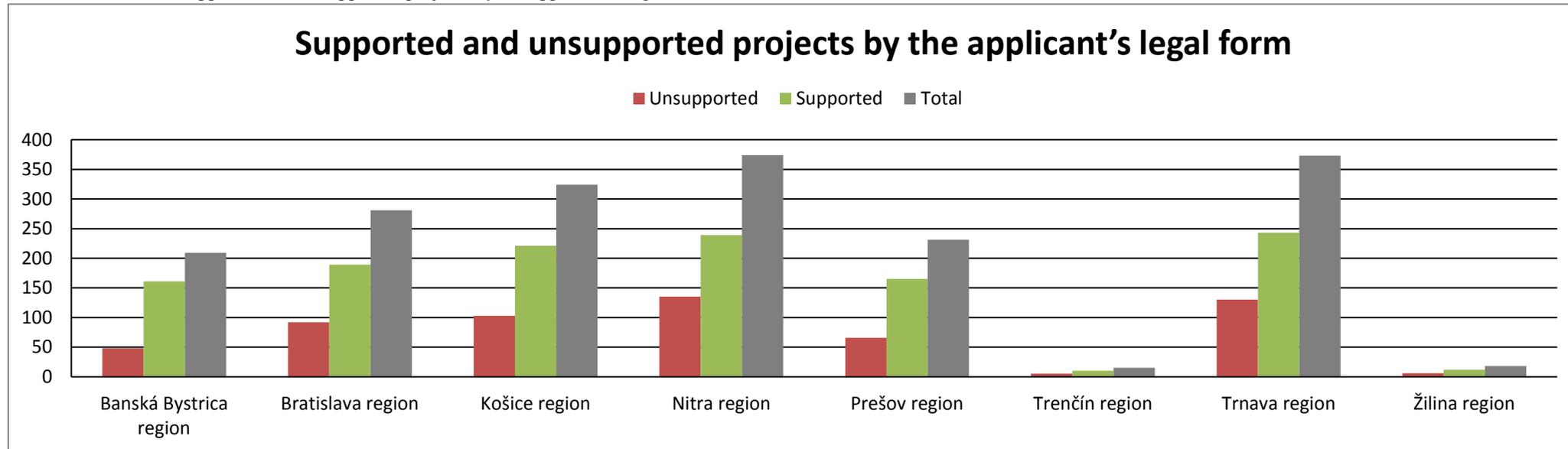


Chart 4: Applied for and approved grant amounts by the applicant's registered office

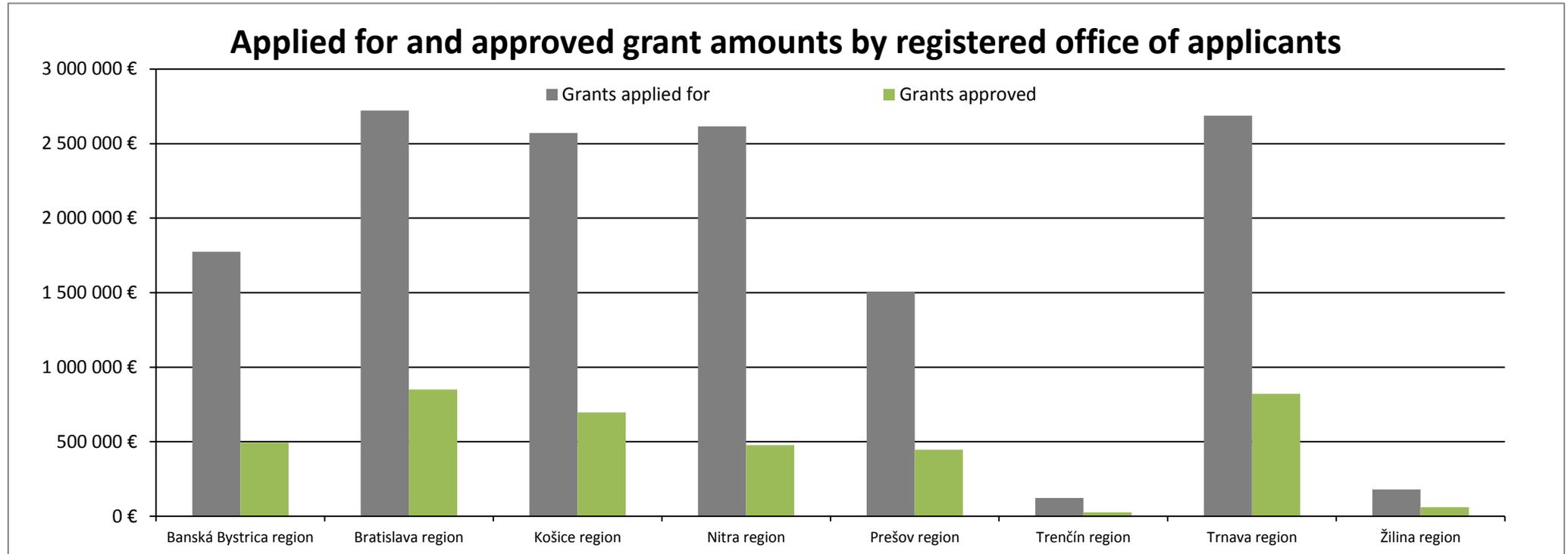


Chart 5: Number of supported projects by area

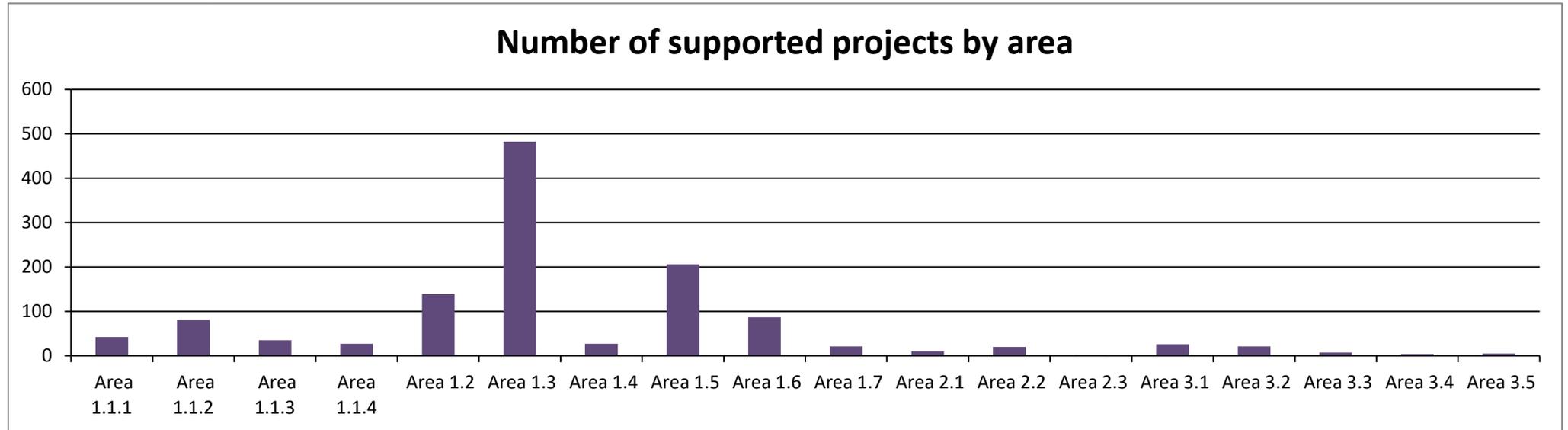


Chart 6: Approved grant amounts by area

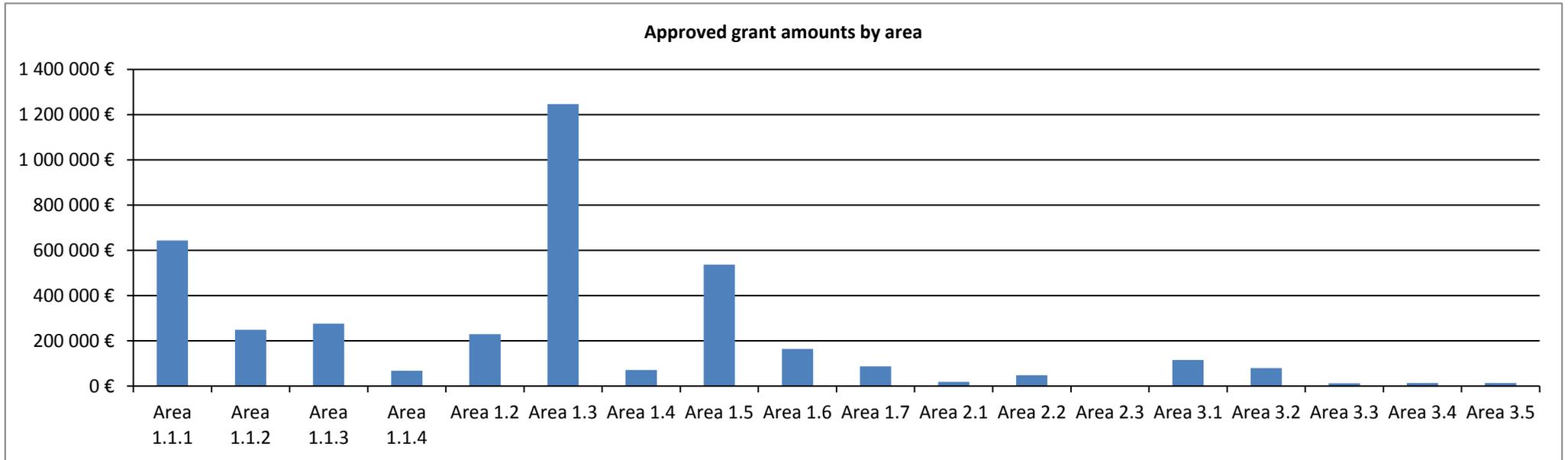


Chart 7: Number of supported projects in the area of periodical press by minority

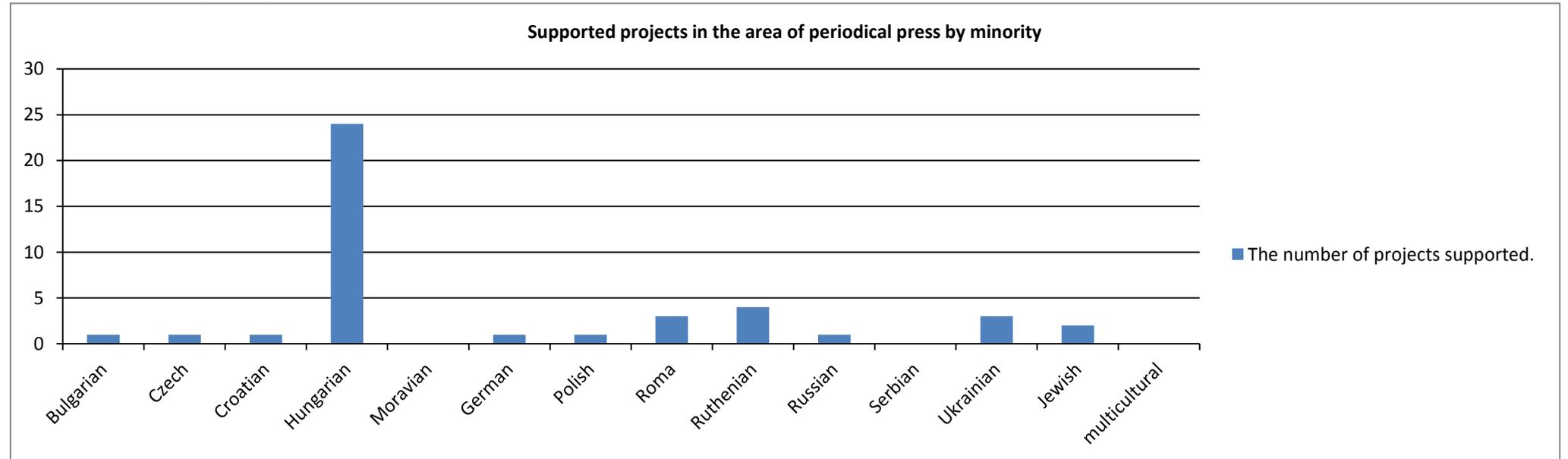


Chart 8: Number of supported projects in the area of non-periodical press by minority

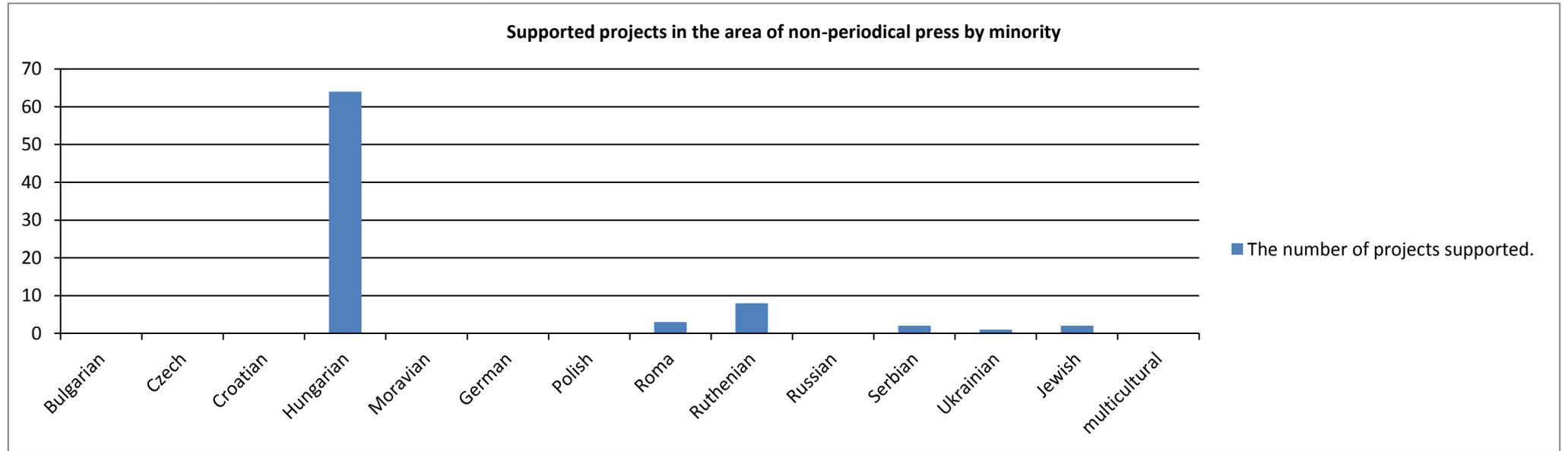


Chart 9: Number of supported projects in the area of electronic media by minority

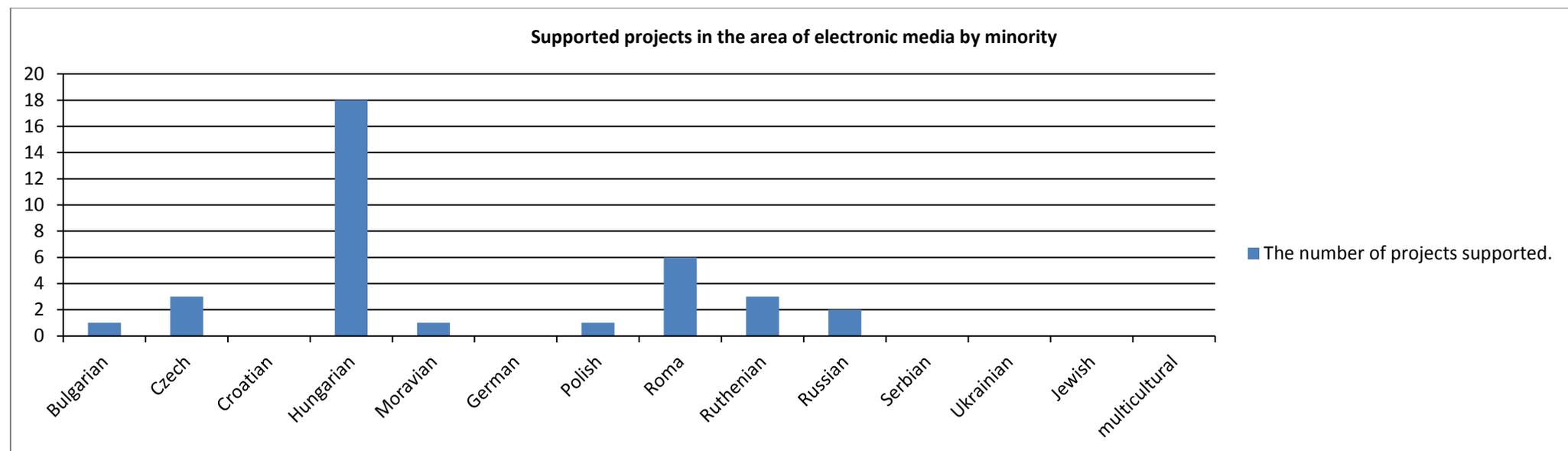


Chart 10: Number of supported projects in the area of multimedia carriers by minority

